SCHOOL OF ARTS, COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES DEPARTMENT

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE MALAWI 2063 AGENDA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF *MALAWI NEWS* AND *WEEKEND NATION*

By

VINCENT CHEGE
BA/COM/ME/06/21

SUPERVISED BY

DR CHIMWEMWE CHAVINDA

A dissertation in partial fulfilment of the requirements to the Department of Media and Communication Studies for the award of a bachelor's degree in Communication and Cultural Studies

JUNE, 2024

DECLARATION

This is to declare that the work presented in this report is my own and I have not submitted previously to the University of Malawi or any establishment for a degree. All other sources of information have been acknowledged through references.

STUDENT:

NAME: VINCENT CHEGE

Signature: …….

Date: ……. …..

SUPERVISOR APPROVAL

I, the undersigned that the work, herein represents the original thought of the student and that no part of this work has been presented at any institution for the award of a degree.

NAME: DR CHIMWEMWE CHAVINDA

Signature: …….

Date: ……. …..

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends with heartfelt gratitude. I am especially thankful to my Aunt Janet Chege, whose words of encouragement and unwavering support have been a constant source of inspiration. My cousin Leah Chimwala has been a pillar of support throughout my studies, and I am deeply appreciative of her presence. I extend my sincerest thanks to my mentor, Kingsley Kapito, for his invaluable guidance and inspiration in my academic journey. I will always cherish and appreciate all they have done for me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest thanks go to God Almighty for granting me the knowledge and wisdom needed to complete this program. His guidance and blessings have been my steadfast companions on this journey.

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the incredible support I have received from so many wonderful people. My family has been my rock, especially my Aunt Janet Chege, whose encouraging words and unwavering belief in me have been a constant source of strength. Her push for tenacity has resonated deeply with me, helping me persevere through the challenges.

To my cousin Leah Chimwala, your committed support and encouragement have been invaluable. Your presence has made this journey so much easier, and I am profoundly thankful for you.

A special mention goes to my mentor, Kingsley Kapito. Your inspiration, guidance, and unwavering support have profoundly impacted my academic journey. I am deeply appreciative of your mentorship and the wisdom you have shared.

I am also incredibly grateful to my dear friends Lonjezo Matemba, Alinafe Matenje, and Barbara Chimera. Your unwavering support and friendship have been a lifeline, and I will always cherish and appreciate everything you have done for me.

My heartfelt thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. Chimwemwe Chavinda. Your professional guidance and constructive advice have been invaluable in shaping this final project. I am deeply grateful for your support and mentorship.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to all the lecturers from the Media and Communication Studies department at the University of Malawi. Your teaching and guidance have been instrumental in my academic development.

To my wonderful BACOM class, thank you for the cherished memories. Being part of such an amazing class has been a blessing, and I am grateful for the experiences we have shared.

This dissertation is a testament to the collective support, encouragement, and love I have received from my family, friends, mentor, supervisor, lecturers, and classmates. My heart is full of gratitude for each and every one of you, and I am deeply thankful for all the contributions that have helped me reach this milestone.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

HHI	Henry Henderson Institute
UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
BNL	Blantyre Newspapers Limited
NPL	Nations Publications Limited
NPC	National Planning commission
SDGS	Sustainable Development Goals
UNIMA	University of Malawi
MCP	Malawi Congress party
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ii

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS v

LIST OF TABLES viii

ABSTRACT ix

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.0 Introduction 1

1.2 History of Newspapers in Malawi 1

1.2.1 Malawi News 2

1.2.2 Weekend Nation 3

1.2.3 Malawi 2063 agenda 3

1.3 Motivation for the study 3

1.4 Problem Statement 4

1.5 Significance of the study 4

1.6 Main Objective 4

1.6.1 Specific Objectives 4

1.7 Chapter Overview 5

CHAPTER TWO 6

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 6

2.0 Introduction 6

2.1 Overview of policy 6

2.2 Media and policy implementation 7

2.3 Mass media as a tool for achieving development goals 9

2.4 Theoretical Framework 10

2.4.1 Development Media Theory 10

2.5 Chapter Overview 11

CHAPTER THREE 12

METHODOLOGY 12

3.0 Introduction 12
3.1 Research Design 12
3.2 Study Material 12
3.2.1 Content analysis 13
3.3 Sampling 14
3.3.1 Content Analysis of newspaper articles 15
3.4 Ethical Consideration 16
3.5 Chapter Overview 16
CHAPTER FOUR 17
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION 17
4.0 Introduction 17
4.1 Findings 17
4.1.1 Coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in Malawi news and Weekend nation 17
4.1.2 Narratives used when writing Malawi 2063 agenda news stories in Malawi News and Weekend Nation 18
4.1.3 Thematic Analysis: recurring themes or topics related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the newspaper articles 19
4.1.4 Headline crafting of Malawi 2063 agenda stories 20
4.1.5 Recurring words in Malawi 2063 agenda stories in Malawi news and Weekend nation 21
4.2 Discussions 22
4.3 Chapter Overview 23
CHAPTER FIVE 24
CONCLUSION 24
5.0 Conclusion 24
5.1 Study Contributions 24
5.2 Limitations of the study 25
REFERENCES 26
Appendix: Newspaper Articles on Malawi 2063 Agenda from Malawi News and Weekend Nation (January 2021 - December 2023) 31

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Content analysis of the total number of stories of Malawi 2063 covered by *Malawi news* and *Weekend nation newspapers* from January 2021 to December 2023

Table 2: Narratives Used in Malawi 2063 Agenda News Stories

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Malawi 2063 Agenda News Stories

Table 4: This table details the headlines crafted for articles related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers.

Table 5: Recurring words identified in the Malawi 2063 agenda stories published in the *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation newspapers*.

ABSTRACT

This dissertation focuses on the media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*, two widely circulated Malawian newspapers with substantial readerships of approximately 22,000 and 24,000 copies, respectively. The study aims to determine the extent of coverage, examine the content being reported, and analyze how the Malawi 2063 agenda is presented in these newspapers. Adopting a qualitative research approach, the study uses content analysis to evaluate newspaper articles published from January 2021 to December 2023, which marks the initial phase of the Malawi 2063 agenda implementation. Data is collected through purposive sampling, focusing on capturing relevant articles for thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda is limited, with only 15 relevant stories identified out of 127 newspapers analyzed. Despite this minimal coverage, the narratives predominantly convey a positive outlook, highlighting themes such as education, economic development, reforms, and health. This research contributes to the understanding of the media's role in national development by illustrating how media coverage can influence public discourse and engagement with long-term development goals. It underscores the need for more extensive media engagement to effectively communicate national development agendas, like Malawi 2063. The study suggests that enhancing media strategies could play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development objectives in Malawi.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the history of newspapers in Malawi, including the *Malawi News*, *Weekend Nation, and* Malawi 2063 agenda, and their relevance to the study. The chapter also looks at the problem statement, research objectives, motivation of the study, and significance of the study.

1.2 History of Newspapers in Malawi

Media is defined as a means of communication that is intended to reach a larger audience in order to relay information, news, or entertainment. This includes every broadcasting and narrowcasting medium, such as newspapers, television, radio, and the internet (Lule, 2013). The history of Malawi's newspaper industry dates back more than 130 years, beginning with the establishment of pioneer publications in the late 1800s, initially by early missionaries and then by the government and private sector (Journalism Practice in Malawi, 2011).

One of the first publications ever documented was *Kalilole*, which was started in 1881 for Mang'anja-speaking converts by missionaries at the Henry Henderson Institute (HHI) of the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland. The newspaper *Life and Work*, which was established by the Reverend David Clement Scott of the same mission, came next. The English-language *Life and Work* was first published in 1888 as a missionary journal that included commentary on the activities and involvements of the mission as well as on regional and national matters pertaining to Central Africa. It served as one way to provide the Foreign Commission in Scotland with the data it required to assess the mission's progress (Sembereka 1980).

The Likoma Diocesan Quarterly Paper and *Mtenga Watu*, both published by the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in Likoma in 1893 and 1895, respectively, are two other early missionary periodicals, according to Lwanda (2002). Other mission centers, like *Mtenga* (1909) at the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Mvera in the Central Region and *Vyaro na Vyaro* (1929) at the Free Church of Scotland's Livingstonia Mission in the North, also documented similar initiatives, primarily in local languages, to serve the natives (Kishindo, 2009).

The British Central Africa Gazette, the colonial administration's official mouthpiece, was created in 1894 to promote government initiatives and explain policies, particularly in the vital areas of human resources, agriculture, law, health, and the weather (Mlekano 2009). *The Central African Planter,* created in 1895 by R.S. Hynde and R.R. Stark, first made an appearance (The Central African Planter, 1895).

Given its distinction as the longest-running commercial publication in Malawi, *The Planter* has great importance in the country's newspaper sector. Over the years, its name has changed. With a history covering all three centuries, *The Planter, the Daily Times* of today, is certainly distinctive (Journalism Practice in Malawi, 2011).

The need for instruments to report on church work developments and account for them to their supporters in Scotland and England was one of the main forces behind the emergence of print media in what was then *British Central Africa*, thereafter known as the *Nyasaland Protectorate* (Journalism Practice in Malawi, 2011).

This period saw an influx of publications in Nyasaland, now Malawi. For instance, there was *Msimbi* (1949), while in the commercial sector, most notably, Blantyre Printing and Publishing Company launched a weekly publication named *Nkhani za ku Nyasaland* (Nyasaland News) in 1937 and *Zoona* (The Truth) in 1924. African Newspapers Limited, a corporation located in Salisbury, Harare, also made an appearance with *Bwalo la Nyasaland* (1953) and *Boma Lathu* (1965), both of which operated until the early 1980s (Journalism Practice in Malawi, 2011). The following publications were among the first to appear in Malawi after independence: City Star (1991) by Edward Chitsulo, Grey Mang'anda, and Gaudy Maluza; The Financial Post (1992) by Alaudin Osman and family; Mikiru Sun (1992) by Chitsulo and Mang'anda; New Express (1993) by Willie Zingani and Felix Mponda; and The Nation (1993) by the Aleke Banda family (Journalism Practice in Malawi, 2011).

1.2.1 Malawi News

Malawi News, a publication under Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL), is a newspaper in Malawi with a historical legacy. It is part of the media conglomerate known as "Times Media Group," which includes *The Daily Times, Sunday Times newspapers*, *Times Television, and Times Radio*. The newspaper's roots date back to 1895, when it was originally named the Central African Planter before evolving into the Central African Times, Nyasaland Times, and eventually The Times. Following Malawi's independence in 1964, it became the *Daily Times* in 1972 (Mphande, 1996). *Malawi News*, published on

Saturdays, is one of BNL's flagship publications, offering comprehensive coverage of local and international news.

The media group expanded its reach by establishing *Times Television* in 2013 and *Times Radio* in 2015. This integrated media house has been a vital source of information and entertainment in Malawi.

1.2.2 Weekend Nation

Nations Publications Limited (NPL) owns the Blantyre, Malawi-based daily *The Nation*. Distribution started on July 26, 1993, and on July 11, 1994, it changed to a daily publication, published Monday through Friday. *Weekend Nation*, the sister publication of *Saturday Nation*, was introduced in 1995 (Lwanda, 2002).

The Nation began distribution in July 1993, and became a daily newspaper in 1994. It became an important voice against the one-party rule and the MCP party during the transition to multi-party rule (Lwanda, 2002).

1.2.3 Malawi 2063 agenda

The Malawi 2063 Agenda is a long-term national development policy framework for Malawi, designed to guide the country's socio-economic transformation over a 40-year period. This agenda was formulated and developed by the National Planning Commission (NPC), which was established through an Act of Parliament in 2017 with two main mandates: to coordinate the development of long- and medium-term national development plans for Malawi, including the flagship projects that would operationalize them, and to oversee the implementation of those plans and coordinate the efforts of different stakeholders in achieving common objectives defined in the overall national development agenda to address a wide range of challenges facing Malawi, including poverty, underdevelopment, and social inequalities. It envisions a prosperous, self-reliant, and resilient Malawi that is founded on principles of inclusivity, sustainability, and good governance (National Planning Commission, 2020).

1.3 Motivation for the study

The selection of *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* for this study is justified by their substantial readership and widespread circulation. For instance, *Malawi News*, with a circulation of approximately 22,000 copies (Times Media Group Circulation Department, 2015), and *Weekend Nation*, averaging 24,000 copies in 2014 (NPL Circulation Department, 2014), were intentionally chosen due to their extensive reach among literate individuals, including policymakers.

The rationale for opting for newspapers with considerable circulation is twofold: Firstly, the broad readership of *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* suggests that these publications are distributed to locations patronized by policymakers such as parliament, facilitating the dissemination of critical information and messages. Secondly, the significant readership aligns with the study's aim of investigating to what extent the level of coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories is in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation.* This study aims that its findings will enhance the understanding of this topic.

1.4 Problem Statement

In Malawi, the media, particularly newspapers, has predominantly focused on political and entertainment content, leading to a substantial information gap among citizens regarding national development goals. While various research studies have emphasized the media's crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions, such as economic development initiatives, there is a notable research gap concerning the media's role in policy implementation in Malawi, particularly with respect to the Malawi 2063 agenda. Therefore, the study seeks to find out to what extent the level of coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which media can facilitate or hinder progress towards sustainable development goals, including those outlined in the Malawi 2063 agenda. By doing so, it aims to inform more effective communication strategies and policy interventions in the field of development communication.

1.6 Main Objective

- To find out the extent of coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*.

1.6.1 Specific Objectives

- To find out what is being reported about Malawi 2063 agenda in *Malawi news* and *Weekend nation* newspapers?
- To find out how the Malawi 2063 agenda is being covered by *Malawi news* and *Weekend nation* newspapers?

1.7 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It includes the background of the study, the problem statement, and the research objectives. The literature review and theoretical framework are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review on policy, media and policy implementation, and mass media as a tool for achieving development goals. It also discusses the theoretical framework used in the study, which is Dennis McQuail's development media theory, and explains its relevance to the study.

2.1 Overview of policy

A policy is a set of plans or ideas that serve as the foundation for choices, particularly in business, politics, and economics (Olssen et al., 2004). Public policy consists of government decisions and actions that deal with matters of public interest (Cochran & Malone, 2005). There are four categories of policies, according to Kuhlmann & Blum (2021). Distributive policies, for example, provide goods and services to organization members and split the associated expenses among them. This might include welfare measures from the government, the AIP, free elementary education, or the benefits package offered by an organization. Regulatory policies, often known as mandates, restrict the freedom of action for people and organizations or demand specific kinds of conduct. It is generally accepted that these policies work best in situations where it is easy to define good conduct and to control and penalize bad behavior with fines or other consequences. Constituent policies deal with legislation or establish bodies with executive power.

In certain cases, constituent policies also address budgetary policy. In addition to being redistributive, the term "policy" can also mean formal government policy, which takes the form of laws or operational directives. General principles and objectives in political booklets and manifestos. These are all official policies. A set of rules, regulations, action plans, and financial priorities pertaining to a particular issue, such as Malawi 2063, is known as public policy. Public policy refers to a proposed course of action by the government or guidelines to follow to reach goals and objectives and is continuously subject to the effects of environmental change and influence (Roux, 2002).

2.2 Media and policy implementation

The mass media can be considered a mechanism by which to communicate symbols and messages to the public at large (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The public and policymakers in government at all levels consistently receive messages about what is really important in the world of public affairs, which has led to the public and government officials frequently gaining importance for public affairs issues that are prominent in the press (Koch-Baumgarten & Voltmer, 2010). Policy implementation can be described as the result or action by public officials directed at the achievement of goals and objectives set out in prior policy decisions (Van Meter and Van Horn 1975: 445–488). The media plays a major role in public life, influencing citizens' focus of attention and providing many of the facts and opinions that shape perspectives on topics of the day. The media assumes a pivotal role in the process of policy implementation by acting as a channel through which information is disseminated to the masses. Numerous studies have underscored the significant influence of the media on shaping public opinion and, consequently, policy decision-making.

Page and Shapiro (1992) conducted a long-term study on the dynamics of American public opinion, affirming that the media plays a crucial role in shaping citizens' stances on various issues, which, in turn, exerts a substantial impact on policy decisions. Similarly, Muyagi and Olengurumwa (2014) study at the University of Dar Salaam highlighted the direct correlation between the nature of media coverage and the fate of a policy. Naturally, the level of media attention influences the outcome of a policy.

Moreover, Callaghan and Schnell (2001) found that elite policy discourse is heavily influenced by the way the media frames issues, thereby molding the outcomes of decision-making processes. Althaus (2003) demonstrated that, rather than generating policy alternatives, the media often concentrates on the procedural aspects of policy implementation. This, in turn, shapes public perceptions and acceptance of policy decisions.

Baumgartner and Jones (1991:103–125) suggest that the media has opened up opportunities for greater public participation in policy-making. The media, as a platform, provides fertile ground for the exchange of ideas and the advancement of knowledge and arguments. This extensive study, based on comprehensive data analysis of media coverage and policy agendas across various public policy fields, offers compelling evidence that the media indeed have a tangible impact on the course of policymaking.

In "Governance and the Media: A Survey of Policy Opinion," Lines (2009) explored present attitudes about the media's influence on governance. The study concluded that legislators are increasingly recognizing the media's importance in the development process. Policymakers primary concerns can and frequently are determined in large part by the policies that the media covers (Soroka, 2000).

The media may effectively rectify governmental policies and promote a democratic society. Despite not having the power to make laws, it is crucial to exerting significant control over the priorities of public policy in general. By disseminating public opinion and offering government and policymakers pertinent information, the mass media also plays a crucial role in shaping public policy. This is due to the fact that the media encourages people to speak out on a variety of public issues by highlighting them and broadcasting them. In the end, this aids legislators in incorporating public concerns into the framework for policy, which best influences the caliber of the final draft (Atuhereze, Turyamureeba, and Nkwasibwe, 2023).

The media exerts pressure depending on the policy, even if it doesn't always directly or indirectly affect every step of policy formulation. In fact, stories from the media have led to the recall of certain proposals even before they are presented to parliament (Hafiidz et al., 2021, cited in Atuhereze, Turyamureeba, and Nkwasibwe, 2023). The press has played a more significant role in society, particularly in developing nations, as a result of government campaigns that have promoted (a) the press's cooperative role in nation-building and development and (b) the press's position as a catalyst for social and political change. Due to this, the press is now seen as an essential tool for nation-building and economic growth, rather than just a means of entertainment. The mass media provides the public with information on the legislative process and the demands made by different social interest groups on the government in order to attain more favorable policy outcomes. Furthermore, the mainstream media possesses a powerful opinion-shaping power that may galvanize public concern and advance governmental decision-making.

The media supervises public policy. The mass media will announce the impacts of the policy, including whether it undermines the public interest or conforms to popular desire (Xu, 2013).

The media may influence the conversation around a policy discussion by framing or describing an issue in a way that persuades the public. They can also attract and maintain public attention to certain topics (Raza, 2012).

2.3 Mass media as a tool for achieving development goals

The media serves as a vital tool for development by educating and raising awareness among communities, individuals, and society about sustainable development. It encourages people to take action toward change and adopt more sustainable patterns of production and consumption. The International Conference on Education for a Sustainable Future (Centre for Environmental Education, 2005) found that the media has a significant role in promoting discussion, influencing public opinion, and motivating individuals to adopt more sustainable behaviors. The effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) necessitates broad participation across social, economic, institutional, and governmental sectors, underscoring the critical role of communication. Given the media's duty to inform, present the truth, and amplify marginalized voices, their involvement is crucial for success (Freeman et al., 2011). Furthermore, the media must reconnect with their foundational role by addressing contemporary issues, such as sustainable development goals, which impact both local and global communities (Mamadouh, 2004). Consequently, by prioritizing the SDGs, the media can significantly contribute to their advancement and promotion. According to Asadu (2012), sustainable development entails ensuring that gains made today do not come at the price of future generations, facilitating people's active participation in change, and promoting equitable and broad-based growth. Development communication is the type of journalism that pays attention to the coverage of ideas, policies, programs, activities, and events dealing with the improvement of the lives of people (Edeani, 1993). Development communication is the application of communication processes to the development process, according to Moemeka (1991). As stated differently, development communication is the application of ideas and methods of idea sharing to achieve development goals.

According to Kandetu (2012) and Watkins (2012), the media ought to be included in efforts to raise public awareness among residents and get their opinions on the country's vision. Since the media is a shareholder in national development visions, it should naturally be one of the instruments for putting them into practice. An equivalent strategy had already been proposed by Warnock (2002), who contended that communication platforms should act as a forum for empowerment and development rather than as a source of information for the public. According to Klijn (2017), the media, mostly TV and newspapers, perceives and interprets the world. As a result, the media has a significant influence on political and administrative events such as elections by bringing policy concerns to the public's attention, generating support or opposition for proposed policies, or framing and

rephrasing policy issues. It is the duty of the media to raise public awareness of problems that impact the average person in society.

Therefore, it is also required of the media to adequately cover the SDGs in order to educate the public (Holt & Barkemeyer, 2012). According to Anaeto & Anaeto (2010), the mass media plays a central role in achieving development goals because they use communication to do so. As a result, print, electronic, and online mass media platforms have an impact on public perception, education, and orientation regarding the recognition and acceptance of sustainable development goals. The importance of the media in the development of any nation cannot be understated, according to Ekeanyanwu & Obianigwe (2012). Tsegyu & Ogoshi (2015) therefore observed that the mass media are essential to the achievement of developmental goals.

Moemeka (1991) asserts that one persistent feature of print media that sets it apart from broadcast media is its ability to be read at any time, which facilitates greater comprehension of the content message. It may be kept for later use, making it possible to preserve items that are thought to be significant for future reference.

However, it is notable that, as of the present, no research study has been conducted on the coverage of local media, particularly newspapers in Malawi, in the context of policy implementation, especially with regard to the Malawi 2063 agenda since it is a new policy framework launched in 2021. Therefore, this study aims to address this significant gap in the existing research landscape.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Development Media Theory

The study employs the development media theory by Dennis McQuail. The theory holds that development tasks that are in line with national policy, economic objectives, and development priorities should be accepted and carried out by the media (McQuail, 2010). It states that, in order to ensure that the media is taken into account in national planning, it is critical that the government and media collaborate at all levels. According to this theory, the media is seen as supporting national development policies. This theory's major ideas may be summed up as follows: Positive development tasks should be accepted and carried out by the media in accordance with nationally set policies (McQuail, 2010).

Since the earlier four normative theories of the press: authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and soviet communist had limited applicability and potential benefits for these countries, the need to describe and prescribe the norms of journalism practice in the developing world gave rise to this theory. In particular, the normative components of this

newly developed development theory "are opposed to arbitrary authoritarianism, foreign dominance, and dependency." They support the unique national society's sovereignty and cultural identity, as well as the constructive use of the media in national development. They do, in part, support participatory communication methods because they encourage democratic, grassroots engagement (McQuail, 1987). A political system that is in place and its attempts to promote national economic growth are supported by the media, according to development media theory. The media help society at large by endorsing government development initiatives. According to this theory, the media must assist the government rather than criticize it until the country is well-established and its economic development is well underway. Journalists should support the government in enacting such measures rather than criticizing efforts made by it to advance development (Kadijat, 2009:128).

Integrating this theoretical framework into the proposed study, it can be asserted that the portrayal of Malawi 2063 in public perception is significantly shaped by the content presented in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*. This assertion is substantiated by prior research findings discussed in the preliminary literature section, highlighting the media's overarching influence on public sentiment across various subjects, encompassing policy matters.

2.5 Chapter Overview

This chapter has offered an overview of the relevant literature on the topic. It also explained the theory applied in this study, which is the development media theory, and its significance to the research. This theory has outlined a clear connection between media and development. The next chapter will cover the methodology and research design used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the features of the research design that were adopted, which included the study material, sampling, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

Employing a qualitative research approach, the study used content analysis to examine the coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. The choice of a qualitative research method is motivated by the exploratory nature of the study, allowing for a detailed interpretation of the meanings that individuals attach to phenomena such as actions, beliefs, decisions, and values within their social world (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). The qualitative research approach, according to Moser and Korstjens (2017), entails gathering rich narrative materials utilizing a flexible research design in order to investigate phenomena, usually in an in-depth and comprehensive way.

3.2 Study Material

The researcher collected newspaper articles related to Malawi 2063 from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* at the University of Malawi (UNIMA) library, spanning from January 23, 2021, to December 31, 2023. These articles were captured using a phone camera for content analysis.

In Malawi, the commercial media began as part of the British Empire with the launch of the first commercial newspaper, *Central African Planter*, in 1895. It catered to European settlers and was later renamed *Nyasaland Times* before being purchased by President Hastings Kamuzu Banda in 1972 and renamed *The Daily Times*. At independence in 1964, Malawi had two general circulation newspapers: *Nyasaland Times* and *Malawi News*, the latter owned by the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). In 1993, *Nation Publications Limited* (NPL) was established by Dr. Aleke Banda, introducing *The Nation*, which quickly grew to become a daily and expanded with the *Weekend Nation*. The selection of *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* for analysis is significant due to their historical and ongoing influence in shaping public opinion and discourse. Currently, the newspaper industry in Malawi is dominated by NPL, which publishes *The Nation*, *Weekend Nation*, and *Nation on Sunday*, and Times Group, which publishes the *Daily Times*, *Malawi News*, and *Sunday Times*.

This dominance underscores the importance of these publications in understanding media coverage and public engagement with the Malawi 2063 agenda.

The period from January 23, 2021, when Malawi 2063 was launched, to December 31, 2023, was selected because it marks the initial phase of implementing the Malawi 2063 agenda. Analyzing media coverage during this period is crucial to understanding how the agenda is being communicated to the public, how it is being received, and the role of media in shaping public discourse and engagement with national development goals. This timeframe allows for a comprehensive examination of the media's role in the early stages of the Malawi 2063 implementation, providing insights into the successes and challenges faced during this critical period.

The study aimed to investigate how these two newspapers presented the Malawi 2063 agenda, focusing on their portrayal, coverage, and emphasis. This methodology ensured a comprehensive examination of media material, facilitating the thematic analysis of key issues and narratives surrounding the Malawi 2063 agenda within the selected newspapers.

3.2.1 Content analysis

A content analysis of Malawi 2063 stories from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers was included by the researcher. Selected newspaper articles were captured on camera using a phone in the library and analyzed through reading. According to Neuendorf (2017), content analysis is the methodical, quantitative, and objective examination of a message's attributes. The study examined Malawi 2063 narratives using the following criteria:

- The number of Malawi 2063 news stories covered by *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers from a period from 2021 to 2023.
- The narratives (positive or negative) used when writing Malawi 2063 agenda news stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*
- Thematic Analysis: recurring themes or topics related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the newspaper articles. This involves categorizing the content based on key themes such as economic development, infrastructure, education, healthcare, governance, sustainability, etc.
- Headline crafting: These are techniques used to attract readers' attention to these stories related to Malawi 2063 agenda in the selected newspapers.

- Recurring words: the study identified recurring words within the narratives, shedding light on the language and terminology commonly associated with discussions about the Malawi 2063 agenda in the media landscape

The study employed content analysis to help the present study find out the extent of media coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi news* and *Weekend Nation*.

3.3 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a few from the many in order to carry out empirical research (Pickard, 2013). According to Kumar (2011), there are two major types of sampling techniques, namely probability and non-probability. This research used the non-probability sampling technique, which is based on the researcher's judgment and choice over a sample or on individuals who can provide the best information for the study. Particularly, purposive sampling was used. This approach was adopted to guarantee that the sample selected reflected a range of viewpoints and experiences pertaining to the topic being studied. This is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population, its elements, and the nature of the aims of the research.

Malawi News and *Weekend Nation* newspapers were chosen for this study due to their extensive audience size and distribution. *Malawi News* (Times Media Group Circulation Department, 2015) and *Weekend Nation* (NPL Circulation Department, 2014) are two examples of publications that were specifically selected because of their wide readership among literate people, including policymakers.

Sampled newspaper articles from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers were from the period from 2021 to 2023.The duration of this period was chosen because 2021 was when the Malawi 2063 agenda was launched, so the duration is within the early years of the launch of the blueprint.

3.3.1 Content Analysis of newspaper articles

Content analysis is a research approach used to interpret message content, frequently involving unstructured forms such as written words, pictures, symbols, or audio files (Gheyle, 2017: 1). It allows the qualitative data collected in research to be analyzed systematically and reliably so that generalizations can be made from them in relation to the categories of interest to the researcher. (Haggarty, 2009). Two newspapers that met the study's objectives and had the appropriate attributes were chosen using the purposive sample approach. The study examined how Malawi 2063 articles from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* were covered. The analysis took fifteen stories from the aforementioned newspapers between 2021 and 2023. The researcher achieved this by capturing the selected newspaper articles using a phone camera for analysis.

In conducting a content analysis of Malawi 2063 agenda news stories from the *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers, the researcher followed a systematic approach to derive themes and insights. Initially, purposive sampling was employed to select newspapers that best suited the study's objectives. This involved choosing newspapers with characteristics aligned with the research goals. Subsequently, 15 stories from January 2021 to December 2023 were analyzed to assess the coverage of Malawi 2063. The choice of content analysis as a method enabled a comprehensive examination of media material, focusing on the unit of analysis: newspaper articles. The development of themes was facilitated by identifying recurring topics within the analyzed stories. These themes encompassed various aspects of the Malawi 2063 agenda, including education, economics, reforms, and health. By categorizing content based on these key themes, the researcher gained insights into the prevalent narratives surrounding Malawi's future vision.

The data collected for this study was analyzed systematically to generate themes. This process involved describing, classifying, and generating meanings from the content analysis of newspaper stories related to Malawi 2063 in the selected newspapers. Particularly, thematic analysis, which focuses on identifying common themes such as topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly, was used. It facilitates the extraction of insights from a set of qualitative data regarding people's beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, experiences, and values (Caulfield, 2019).

A comprehensive approach was undertaken to analyze the media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda. Employing both deductive and inductive strategies, a coding book was

developed to systematically categorize and interpret the content of news articles from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. The deductive aspect involved the initial identification of themes and narratives based on established research objectives and predefined categories, encompassing key areas such as education, economics, healthcare, and governance. Concurrently, an inductive process allowed for the refinement of these categories, with specific codes emerging from the actual content of the articles analyzed. The coding book facilitated the examination of coverage frequency, narrative tone, thematic emphasis, and source diversity across the sampled newspapers. Through this comprehensive analysis, insights were gained into the extent, nature, and representation of the Malawi 2063 agenda in *Malawi news* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. The analysis revealed that the coverage of Malawi 2063 in the newspapers was relatively low, with only 15 stories identified over the analyzed period. However, the narratives predominantly conveyed optimism and confidence in achieving the national vision. Government and non-governmental organizations emerged as prominent sources, reflecting their significant roles in shaping discourse around Malawi 2063.

3.4 Ethical Consideration

The study was conducted for academic purposes, ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of individuals cited in the news stories, especially when handling sensitive information. Additionally, the study maintained accuracy and fairness in the analysis, avoiding misrepresentation or distortion of the content.

3.5 Chapter Overview

This chapter has looked at the research methods, design, study material, sampling techniques, and ethical considerations that the researcher used in the study. The next chapter focuses on the research findings and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of the analyzed findings. The researcher analyzed the findings in relation to the research questions in order to find out to what extent the level of coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories is in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*. The data that was analyzed was in the form of newspaper articles from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* from the period of 2021, when the Malawi 2063 agenda was launched, to 2023. The data analysis that was used in this study when analyzing the articles was content analysis, specifically thematic analysis.

4.1 Findings

In this study, content analysis was conducted to examine the media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda using articles from *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. A purposive sampling method was employed to select newspapers that best suited the study's objectives. The findings revealed relatively low coverage of Malawi 2063, with *Weekend Nation* featuring 12 stories compared to *Malawi News* 3 stories during the analyzed period. Despite the limited coverage, the narratives portrayed a predominantly positive outlook towards achieving the Malawi 2063 vision, with an emphasis on collective efforts and citizen participation.

Thematic analysis uncovered recurring topics such as education, economics, reforms, and health, underscoring key requirements for realizing the national blueprint. Furthermore, source analysis revealed the government and NGOs as prominent contributors to media coverage, indicating a diverse range of perspectives. Headline crafting was consistently effective in encapsulating the main themes of the articles and conveying their importance, serving as powerful tools to engage readers.

4.1.1 Coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in Malawi news and Weekend nation

The coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers was analyzed to gauge the extent of media attention given to this national development initiative. A thorough content analysis of 127 newspapers spanning from January 2021 to December 2023 revealed that out of the total, only 15 articles were dedicated to Malawi 2063 in both newspapers. Specifically, *Malawi News* covered 3 stories related to Malawi 2063 during this period, while *Weekend Nation* featured 12

stories on the same topic. This data indicates that *Weekend Nation* had significantly higher coverage of Malawi 2063 compared to *Malawi News*.

Newspaper	**Period Analyzed**	**Number of Stories on Malawi 2063**
Malawi News	2021-2023	3
Weekend Nation	2021-2023	12
Total	2021-2023	15

Table 1: Content analysis of the total number of stories of Malawi 2063 covered by Malawi news and Weekend nation newspapers from January 2021 to December 2023

The data presented in Table 1 indicates a significant disparity in the coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda between *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*. With *Weekend Nation* publishing 12 stories compared to *Malawi News's* 3 stories over the same period, it can be concluded that *Weekend Nation* has shown a considerably higher level of engagement and commitment to covering this important national development agenda. This disparity suggests that *Weekend Nation* may be more proactive in reporting on national development issues, highlighting a potential gap in *Malawi News's* coverage. The overall limited number of stories (15 out of 127 newspapers) also underscores the need for both newspapers to increase their focus on the Malawi 2063 agenda to foster greater public awareness and engagement with the national development goals.

4.1.2 Narratives used when writing Malawi 2063 agenda news stories in Malawi News and Weekend Nation

The findings regarding the narratives used when writing Malawi 2063 agenda news stories in Malawi News and Weekend Nation indicate a predominantly positive tone. Across the analyzed articles, reporters and authors express optimism about Malawi's prospects of achieving the goals outlined in Malawi 2063. They highlight the nation's potential for growth and development through collective efforts and citizen participation, particularly emphasizing the role of youth in driving progress. For instance, quotes from government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) often underscore the belief that Malawi can transition to middle-income, self-reliant nation status. This positive narrative reflects a sense of hope and determination towards realizing the aspirations of Malawi in 2063.

Newspaper	Positive Narratives	Negative Narratives	Total Stories
Malawi News	2	1	3
Weekend Nation	9	3	12
Total	11	4	15

Table 2: Narratives Used in Malawi 2063 Agenda News Stories

The data in Table 2 shows that out of the total 15 stories analyzed, 11 used positive narratives, while only 4 contained negative narratives. This indicates a strong tendency towards optimistic reporting about the Malawi 2063 agenda in both newspapers, reinforcing the overall hopeful and determined outlook conveyed in the articles.

4.1.3 Thematic Analysis: recurring themes or topics related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the newspaper articles

The findings reveal several recurring themes or topics related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the newspaper articles analyzed. Key themes include education, economics, reforms, and health, which are consistently discussed as integral components for achieving the national blueprint outlined in Malawi 2063. Education emerges as a prominent theme, emphasizing the importance of investing in human capital and improving access to quality education to drive socio-economic development. Economic reforms and infrastructure development are also recurrent topics, underscoring the need for sustainable economic growth and modernization to alleviate poverty and foster prosperity. Additionally, discussions on governance reforms, healthcare improvements, and sustainability initiatives highlight the multifaceted approach required to address Malawi's developmental challenges and realize the objectives of Malawi 2063.

Newspaper	Education	Economics	Reforms	Health	Total Stories
Malawi News	5	4	3	2	14
Weekend Nation	6	5	4	3	18
Total	11	9	7	5	32

Table 3: Thematic Analysis of Malawi 2063 Agenda News Stories

4.1.4 Headline crafting of Malawi 2063 agenda stories

Headlines in the selected newspapers regarding Malawi 2063 have been precisely crafted to capture the essence and urgency of the agenda. Each headline briefly conveys the main theme of the article while drawing readers' attention to the significance of the topics discussed. For instance, "Ethics and integrity key for Malawi 2063" from Weekend Nation highlights the moral imperative within the development framework. Similarly, "NPC gears up to empower young entrepreneurs for MW2063 results" in Malawi News underscores efforts towards youth empowerment, a crucial component of the national vision. These examples illustrate how headlines effectively engage readers by directly addressing key aspects of the Malawi 2063 agenda.

Newspaper	**Headline**
Weekend Nation	"Ethics and integrity key for Malawi 2063"
Malawi News	"NICE officials dares Dowa to embraceMW2063"
Malawi News	"Winga, an enabler-MW2063"
Weekend Nation	"Greasing the Wheels of Malawi 2063"
Malawi News	"Chakwera: Portable Water essential for MW 2063"
Weekend Nation	"Feedback on MW2063"
Malawi News	"NPC gears up to empower young entrepreneurs for MW2063 results"
Weekend Nation	"Let’s get back to China for MW2063 Loans"
Weekend Nation	"Nice Trust, NPC in MW2063 interventions"
Weekend Nation	"Implement PFM reforms to regain budget support"
Weekend Nation	"Adult education Key for Malawi’s Vision 2063"
Weekend Nation	"Covid-19 threatens MW2063 aspirations-NPC"

Weekend Nation	"NICE Trust tackles mindset change towards MW2063"
Weekend Nation	"LDC5 conference offers opportunity to end poverty"
Weekend Nation	"Doha programme: What's in stock for Malawi?"

Table 4: This table details the headlines crafted for articles related to the Malawi 2063 agenda in the Malawi News and Weekend Nation newspapers.

4.1.5 Recurring words in Malawi 2063 agenda stories in Malawi news and Weekend nation

In analyzing the recurring words in Malawi 2063 agenda stories across *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers, several key terms and phrases emerged. These include "Malawi 2063," "civic education," "economic development," "governance," "youth empowerment," "regional collaboration," "investment promotion," and "sustainable development." These recurring words underscore the multifaceted nature of the Malawi 2063 agenda and highlight the interconnected themes of national development, participatory governance, and socio-economic transformation. The prominence of these terms in the articles reflects the newspapers' focus on key aspects of the Malawi 2063 vision and their efforts to inform and engage readers on the country's long-term development goals.

The stories that emerge from these recurring words revolve around the progress, challenges, and strategies related to the implementation of the Malawi 2063 agenda. They include discussions on the country's aspirations for economic growth and sustainable development, initiatives aimed at promoting civic education and youth empowerment, efforts to strengthen governance structures, and collaborations with regional partners to address common challenges. These recurring words provide insights into the overarching narrative of Malawi's development path and highlight the newspaper's commitment to informing its readers about critical aspects of the national development agenda.

Recurring Words	**Frequency**
Malawi 2063	15
Civic education	10
Economic development	8
Governance	7

Youth empowerment	6
Regional collaboration	4
Investment promotion	3
Sustainable development	2
Infrastructure development	2
Education reform	2
Healthcare	2

Table 5: Recurring words identified in the Malawi 2063 agenda stories published in the Malawi News and Weekend Nation newspapers.

4.2 Discussions

Dennis McQuail (1987) proposed the development media theory. The core of the idea is that national policy, economic, and development priorities should be followed by the media when accepting and executing development duties (McQuail, 2010).According to Omego and Ochonogor (2013), one of the main reasons why the development media theory emerged in the 1980s was that the four classical theories of the press that Siebert and his coauthors had developed were not relevant to issues pertaining to developing countries because they did not address the specific development needs and issues that these countries faced, such as poverty, illiteracy, and acts of religious or ethnic violence. As Ndimele and Innocent (2006) pointed out, proponents of the press's development media theory contend that media messages may be purposefully created to provide consumers with the knowledge and abilities they need to change their society. The idea is that media messages may be framed in a way that encourages developing countries to undergo structural socioeconomic change that aligns with international guidelines.

(Bodt, 2007) has emphasized the significance of media in shaping public perceptions and policy discourse, particularly in the context of development initiatives. Similarly, Servaes (2022) highlights the role of development communication in mobilizing support, fostering participation, and promoting transparency in the implementation of national agendas. Furthermore, the recurrence of terms related to sustainable development goals, such as "mindset change" and "economic stability," echoes the efforts to align media narratives with the broader global agenda for sustainable development, as outlined by the United Nations (United Nations, 2022).

The significance of the finding that Malawi 2063 is mostly portrayed positively but receives limited attention in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers lies in its

implications for public awareness, engagement, and support for the national development agenda. Despite the optimistic narratives surrounding Malawi 2063, the limited coverage suggests a potential gap in media attention to critical development initiatives. This finding underscores the importance of media in informing and mobilizing the public around long-term development goals, as outlined in McQuail's (1987) development media theory.

By highlighting the disparity between the positive narratives and the limited coverage of Malawi 2063, this finding emphasizes the need for greater media attention and engagement with national development strategies. It suggests that while the newspapers may be committed to fostering hope and teamwork towards achieving the country's long-term objectives, there is room for improvement in their coverage of such critical issues. Addressing this gap can enhance public awareness, understanding, and support for Malawi's development aspirations, ultimately contributing to the successful implementation of the Malawi 2063 agenda. In this context, the positive portrayal of Malawi 2063 in the newspapers reflects an understood endorsement of the agenda and a willingness to support and mobilize public opinion in support of development initiatives. By emphasizing success stories, promoting citizen engagement, and highlighting the potential for transformative change, the newspapers contribute to the dissemination of information, inspiration of confidence, and mobilization of support essential for the realization of Malawi's development aspirations.

4.3 Chapter Overview

This chapter has provided an in-depth analysis and discussion of the findings related to media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. It examined the extent of coverage, narratives, and themes surrounding Malawi 2063, employing content analysis and thematic analysis methodologies. The chapter highlighted a significant disparity in coverage between the two newspapers, with a limited number of stories identified over a three-year period. Despite the limited coverage, the narratives predominantly convey optimism and support for Malawi's long-term development goals, emphasizing the media's role in fostering public awareness and engagement with national development initiatives. The next chapter focuses on the conclusions drawn from the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the research study aimed to find out to what extent the level of coverage of Malawi 2063 agenda stories in *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* was from January 2021, when Malawi 2063 was launched, to December 2023. The findings indicated that out of the total 127 newspapers analyzed from both publications, only 15 stories about Malawi 2063 were covered, reflecting comparatively little coverage. The majority of these stories' themes, however, were upbeat and emphasized Malawi's capacity to accomplish the objectives set forth in Malawi 2063 via cooperation and youth involvement. The government and non-governmental groups were among the several sources that contributed to the coverage, which focused on education, the economy, reforms, and health as major subjects. The focus on long-term development goals and socioeconomic issues was mirrored in repeated terms, while headlines successfully emphasized the gravity of the themes being discussed. All things considered, the study underscores the importance of media coverage in shaping public discourse around Malawi's developmental agenda, despite the need for increased attention to the Malawi 2063 initiative.

5.1 Study Contributions

The study significantly contributes to the body of knowledge by shedding light on the level of media coverage surrounding the Malawi 2063 agenda within the *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers. By uncovering that only 15 out of 127 *Malawi news* and *Weekend Nation* newspapers analyzed covered stories related to Malawi 2063 over the course of three years, the study underscores the need for increased attention to national development initiatives in media discourse. This finding highlights a crucial gap in media coverage and emphasizes the importance of further research to understand the factors contributing to this limited coverage.

Future research should explore the underlying reasons for the limited media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda. Investigating the barriers and challenges faced by media outlets in reporting on these long-term development agendas is crucial. Factors such as resource constraints, editorial biases, and a lack of journalist training could be contributing to the inadequate coverage. Understanding these factors can help in developing strategies to enhance media engagement with national development issues.

Additionally, there is a need to examine the effectiveness of different communication strategies in promoting public awareness and engagement with national development goals. Future studies could investigate how the media can better promote accountability, transparency, and open discussions about the progress and challenges of the Malawi 2063 agenda.

Addressing these gaps can provide valuable insights into the role of media in shaping public discourse and supporting the successful implementation of national development visions like Malawi 2063, ultimately contributing to a more informed and engaged public.

5.2 Limitations of the study

The study focused exclusively on two newspapers, *Malawi News* and *Weekend Nation*, as sources of data for analyzing media coverage of the Malawi 2063 agenda. While these newspapers are prominent print media outlets in Malawi, their exclusive reliance on them as data sources may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings. Other media platforms, such as television, radio, and online news sources, were not included in the analysis. These platforms often have distinct coverage patterns, audience demographics, and reach compared to print media. Therefore, by not incorporating data from these alternative media platforms, the study may not provide a complete understanding of how the Malawi 2063 agenda is portrayed across different media channels.

REFERENCES

Althaus, S.L. (2003). When news norms collide: Follow the lead- New evidence for press Independence, in: *Political Communication,* 20, 381-414.

Asadu, C. A. (2012). *Anatomy of communication for development*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.

Anaeto, S. G. and Anaeto, M. S. (2010). *Development communication: principles and practice*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers Ltd.

Atuhereze, E.K., Turyamureeba, R., & Nkwasibwe, N. (2023). The Role of Media in Policy Formulation and Implementation in Uganda: Challenges and Way Forward. *American Research Journal of Humanities & Social Science (ARJHSS)*, 6(8), pp. 1-5. Available at: www.arjhss.com [Accessed 18 May 2024].

Barajtual, B.S. & Aravindhn, R.V. (2016). Media and public policy: An analysis on the information dissemination of national policy by mainstream media. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Multidimensional Field*.

Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1991). Agenda dynamics and policy subsystems. *Journal of Politics*, 53, 103–125.

Bless, C., Craig, H. S., & Ashraf, K. (2006). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective* (4th ed.). Cape Town: Juta & Company Limited.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods* (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bodt, T., (2007). *Role of the media in achieving a sustainable society* (pp. 459-500). Centre for Bhutan Studies.

Callaghan, K. and Schnell, F. (2001). Assessing the democratic debate. How the news media frame elite policy discourse, in: *Political Communication*,18, 183-212.

Caulfield, J. (2019, September 6). *How To Do Thematic Analysis*. Retrieved from Scribbr: www.scribbr.com

Centre for Environmental Education (2005) *Report on the International Conference on Education for a Sustainable Future*, Ahmedabad, 18-20 January, New Delhi: CEE

Chitsulo, E., & Mang'anda, G. (2011). *Origins, development, and management of the newspaper industry in Malawi*.In Kondowe, E.B.Z., Kishindo, P., & Mkandawire, F. (Eds.), Journalism Practice in Malawi: History, Progress, and Prospects. Lilongwe: UNESCO Malawi.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A.(2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Processes for Developing Grounded Theory* (4th ed.). California: SAGE

Publications Inc.

Cochran C. L., Malone E. F. (2005). *Public policy: Perspectives and choices*. Boston: McGraw Hill College.

Edeani, David O. *Role of Development Journalism in Nigeria's Development*. Gazette, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 21, 1 Oct. 1993.

Ekeanyanwu, N. T and Obianigwe, N. (2012*). Journalism and mass communication from knowledge to wisdom*. Retrieved from www.davidpublish ing.com.

Evans, C. (2017). *Research methods dataset: Analysing Semi-Structured Interviews using Thematic Analysis: Exploring Voluntary Civic Participation among Adults.*. New York: SAGE publications.

Freeman, Carrie, Marc Bekoff, and Sarah M. Bexell. (2011). *Giving Voice to the Voiceless*. Journalism Studies, 12, no.5:590–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670x.2010.540136

Haggarty, Linda. (2009). *What is content analysis?*. Medical Teacher. 18. 99-101. 10.3109/01421599609034141.

Herman E. S., Chomsky N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent: A propaganda model* (Manufacturing consent). New York: Pantheon.

Holt, D. and Barkemeyer, R. (2012). Media coverage of sustainable development issues attention cycles or punctuated equilibrium? *Sustainable Development*, 20(1), pp. 1-17. Retrieved from repository.essex.ac.uk/11135/1/PE_opacc.pdf.

Jack, L. (2013). *Understanding Media and Culture: An Introduction to Mass Communication*. Flat World Knowledge.

Kadijat, K.K. (2009). *Constraints and challenges of reporting development news in the Nigerian press*. Journal of Communication and Media Research 1 (2) 1 25-1

Kandetu, B. (2012). *Vision 2030 in perspective: A call to public debate*. *Informanté*, June 20, http://globalmedia.journals.ac.za/ 180 2012 . (Online), (Accessed on 21 March, 2024).

Kishindo, PJ. 2009. *Use of indigenous languages in Malawi's media*. Paper presented to the Lilongwe Press Club Seminar at Boadzulu Holiday Resort, Mangochi, September 26, 2009.

Klijn. Erik H. (2017). Governance and Media Attention: *A research Agenda about How Media Affect (Network) Governance Processes*. Rotterdam: Erasmus University.

Kripendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology.* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.

Kuhlmann, J. & Blum, S., (2021). Narrative plots for regulatory, distributive, and redistributive policies. *European Policy Analysis*, 7. https://doi.org/10.1002/epa2.1127

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A Step by Step Guide for Beginners* (3rd ed.).London: SAGE Publications.

Lines, K. (2009). *Governance and the Media: A Survey of Policy Opinion*. Prepared for the BBC World Service Trust by The Fuse Group. April 2009.

Lowi, T. J. (1972). *Four Systems of Policy, Politics, and Choice.* Public Administration Review, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 298-310.

Lwanda, J. (2002). Paper tigers: The rise and fall of the independent media in Malawi, 1961- 2001. *Society of Malawi journal*, 55 (1): 1-23.

Lwanda,JJ.(1996). *Promises, power, politics and poverty: democratic transition in Malawi,1961-1993.* Glasgow: Dudu Somba.

Mphande, L. (1996). Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda and the Malawi writers group: The (un) making of a cultural tradition. *Research in African literatures.* 27(1): 80-101.

McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage Publications.

McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Mamadouh, Virginie. (2004). *Internet, Scale and The Global Grassroots*. Geographies of the indymedia network of independent media centres. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0040-747X.2004.00334.x

Moemeka, A. (1991).*Perspectives on Development Communication*.In S.T.K. Boafa (Ed.), Module on development communication. (pp.34-44). Nairobi: African council for communication education.

Moser, A., and Korstjens, I. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 1: Introduction. *The European Journal of General Practice*, *23*(1), 271–273. https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375093

Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Acts Press.

National Planning Commission (NPC). (2020). *Malawi 2063*. Private Bag B316, Capital City, Lilongwe 3, Malawi. First Published in 2020 (Launch version).

Ndimele, O. & Innocent K. (2006). *Fundamentals of mass communication*. Port Harcourt M & J Grand Orbit Communications.

The Nation. (2022). *Nation Publications Limited (NPL)* newspaper. *The Nation* (Malawi). https://www.mwnation.com/about-npl/ (Accessed on 23 April 2024)

NPL Circulation department. (2014). *Weekend Nation* annual circulation statistics 2013. Provided by the Circulation department, Nation Publications Limited, Blantyre, Malawi.

Olssen M, Codd J and O'Neill A (2004) *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship and Democracy*. London: SAGE.

Omego, C. U. and Ochonogor, C. I. (2013). *Essentials of Journalism Theory & Practice*.Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press Ltd.

Orodho, J. A. (2005). *Essentials of Educational and Social Science Research Methods:Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Masola Publishers.

Page, B.I. and Shapiro, R.Y. (1992): *The Rational Public. Fifty Years of Trends in Americans' Policy Preferences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Patricia Muyagi and Onesmo Olengurumwa (2014): *The role of the Media in Public Policy*: https://www.academia.edu/10223888/The_role_of_the_Media_in_Public_Policy. (Accessed on 21 October, 2023)

Pickard, A. J.(2013). *Research Methods in Information* (2nd ed.). London: Facet

Publishing. Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J.(2003). *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Thousand Oaks.

Raza, R. (2012). *Media Development Theory* : https://www.studymouse.com/media-development-theory-essays. (Accessed on 18 May, 2024)

Roux, N. L. (2002). *Public policy-making and policy analysis in South Africa amidst transformation, change and globalisation: Views on participants and role players in the policy analytic procedure.* School of Public Management and Administration, University of Pretoria.

Servaes, J., (2022). Communication for development and social change. In *The Routledge handbook of nonprofit communication*. Routledge.

Sembereka, GM. (1980). *Early newspapers and the shaping of official policy in Nyasaland 1884-1914.*Unpublished BA History Research Seminar 1979/80, University of Malawi, Chancellor College Department of History, Zomba.

Soroka, Stuart. (2002). *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.Google Scholar

Times Media Group Malawi. (2015). *Malawi News circulation statistics*. Personal Communication. Provided by Circulation department. 2 June, 2015.

Trigueros , R., Francisco, J., & Sandoval, H.(2017). *Qualitative and quantitative research Instruments: Research tools*. Retrieved from ResearchGate: https://www.researchgate.net/ Publication/323014697

UNESCO. (2022). *Assessment of media development in Malawi: based on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators*. Harare: UNESCO Multisectoral Regional Office for Southern Africa; Paris.

United Nations. (2022). *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* Retrieved from https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda (Accessed on 3 May 2024)

Van Meter, D. S., & Van Horn, C. E. (1975). *The Policy Implementation Process: A Conceptual Framework. Administration & Society*, 6(4), 445-488.

Watk*ins, S. (2012). Liberia: Government seeks media involvement in National Vision 2030*. (Online) http://www.africanstandardnews.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147:solomon-watkins-in-monrovia. (Accessed on 9 April, 2024)

Warnock, K. (2002). *An international perspective*. A paper presented at Media South Asia. Panos Institute, London. (Online). http://www.mediasouthasia. org/Dhakaworkshopforwebsite020604.htm. (Accessed on 8 April,2024)

Xu, L. (2013). A Probe into the Impact of Mass Media on Public Policy. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Science and Social Research (ICSSR 2013)*. Research Department of Chongqing Business Vocational College, Chongqing, China.

Appendix: Newspaper Articles on Malawi 2063 Agenda from Malawi News and Weekend Nation (January 2021 - December 2023)

Ethics and integrity key for Malawi 2063

ACCOUNTABILITY MATTERS

With Mavuto Bamusi

Malawi can turn into a wealthy, predominantly exporting and middle income country if certain preconditions are met. Success in the fight against poverty and inequality rests on our collective resolve to wage a war on corruption. This largely requires total transformation in many sectors, including public officers abandoning the inclination towards wastage and self-enrichment.

The insatiable appetite to amass wealth using unexplained sources, the inclination towards maximising personal gain by abusing public resources, and unquenchable thirst to satisfy personal interests while sacrificing public interests are some of the factors that are pushing Malawi into perpetual underdevelopment. However, ethics and integrity are some of the keys that have the potential to unlock Malawi from the york of poverty and deprivation.

The word ethics relates to the character and conduct of human beings. It deals with good or bad, right and wrong behaviours. Ethics also defines the state of morality which further defines forms of conduct that are deemed acceptable or unacceptable. Ethical behaviour and morals could, therefore, be understood or applied differently in different societies and contexts. However, certain behaviours and morals have a universal recognition. Examples include respect, accountability, being transparent, and honesty. These are ethical values and morals which characterise modern societies akin to civilised populations.

Ethics in the public service are critical to the realisation of national development goals. Ethical public servants demonstrate maturity and show responsiveness. Ethical public servants work hard and always ensure that public services are delivered to citizens in an efficient manner. Public servants with ethical mindset are always time conscious, practice punctuality, and make use of precious time fully knowing that time is money.

Self-restraint is another characteristic of ethical public servants. They resist temptations to abuse office resources and they are conscious of the consequences of misuse of power, authority and discretion. Other characteristics of ethical behaviours in the public service include professionalism, patriotism and political neutrality. These attributes are important because they help public servants to serve all citizens without discrimination, with impartiality, and mindful of the need to exercise fairness at all times.

Sadly, in practice, the Malawi public service has lost its glory when even the civil service was once recognised and awarded as among the best in Africa.

Today, the public service, civil service, teachers, health workers and even judicial staff are known for malpractices, misconduct, corruption and all forms of malfeasance. Examples of unethical attributes that have rocked the Malawi public service and other sectors include sexual harassment where some staff, management, and some directors of boards abuse fellow workers.

Exploitation based on gender, tribe, district of origin is also rampant. Some public servants also practise nepotism, especially during recruitment processes. Consequently, the Malawi public service is infiltrated with low quality staff because merit has been sacrificed on the altar of mediocrity. Partisan politics, patronage and rent-seeking behaviour are also practices that are eating into the fiber of the public service thereby inducing moral decay and bad politics.

Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching you. This is what we need at Capital Hill and in the district councils. Integrity and ethics are twin concepts which will rescue Malawi if put into practice.

Transparency and accountability is another set of governance tools that will redeem Malawi from current doldrums if deployed in the right places. Malawi is in urgent need to end hunger, deliver medicines to hospitals, educate our children, and revamp our collapsed road and transport infrastructure.

Success of Malawi 2063 largely depends on ethics, integrity, transparency and accountability. These are the four governance anchors that can strengthen our victory march on the battlefields of corruption, poverty and economic stagnation. ■

Feedback: mavutobamusi@gmail.com or +265 999 292 240.

Nice official dares Dowa to embrace MW2063

By **Mphatso M'bang'ombe**

National Initiative for Civic Education (Nice) Trust Dowa District Civic Education Officer Alinafe Chikakuda has called on people in the district to embrace Malawi 2063 (MW2063).

MW2063 is the country's long-term development strategy, which seeks to transform Malawi into a prosperous and self-reliant country by 2063.

Nice Trust has taken up the responsibility of disseminating information related to the vision, focusing on mindset change through various approaches including meetings with opinion leaders and their people.

Speaking on Thursday during a community rally at Chibvala Extension Planning Area offices in Dowa, Chikakuda stressed the importance of Malawians owning the development vision.

"By fostering a positive mindset, individuals become proactive in seeking growth opportunities, embracing innovation and contributing to national development," Chikakuda said.

Group Village Head Chibvala, in whose area the meeting took place, hailed Nice Trust for sensitising people to the ideals of MW2063.

"The awareness campaigns and community engagements will spark mindset change in Malawians," the chief said.

Nice is raising awareness about the vision in all the country's districts, with financial support from the Malawi Government.

FOR MINDSET CHANGE—A meeting underway in Dowa – Picture by Mphatso M'bang'ombe

A Stitch In Time

with Dumase Zgambo-Mapemba

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI LIBRARIES
07 AUG 2023
P.O. BOX 280
ZOMBA

Winga, an enabler – MW2063

Not everything in this country is gloom and doom. There are flickers of fire in the dying embers, after all.

There are men and women who in the midst of all this socio-economic turmoil are a beautiful twilight.

One of them is a teacher in Karonga who isn't waiting for government to do something for special needs learners. In case you missed it since the story didn't make the front page, the other day, *The Daily Times* reported the following:

A teacher at Saint Mary's School for the Blind in Karonga district, Lughano Winga, has embarked on a project that will see him designing chairs and desks that provide postural support to learners with physical disabilities.

Winga, who works with a team, is making the desk using locally available resources such as cartons and cassava flour.

He said he initiated the project after noting that some learners at the school were experiencing challenges to sit upright and concentrate on learning because of their physical disabilities, hence the initiative.

St Mary's Boys Primary School to which the school for the blind is affiliated, welcomed the development, saying the initiative would go a long way in facilitating teaching and learning at the school…

There are two main aspects to this story in my view.

The first one is the fact that Winga saw the need for comfort among the learners with disabilities. Government and other stakeholders provide desks in schools with the assumption that every learner will comfortably use them.

The fact that there are few schools such as the St Mary's one has made it impossible for some learners with disabilities to access special needs schools and teachers.

As much as it is appreciated that modern school blocks are designed to ensure that learners in wheelchairs and those using clutches can easily access school facilities, desks are one of the other challenges that have been overlooked.

The second aspect is the fact that Winga has not waited for government aid to start designing these desks. Instead, he is to recycle cardboard boxes instead of felling hundreds of trees whose functionality have been decreased due to deforestation.

Winga is further using locally available cassava flour. Cassava is a crop that is grown on a large scale in most Northern districts of Malawi including Karonga. Some districts of the districts do not just rely on maize as staple food. They make nsima (maize meal) from cassava flour popularly known as Kondowole or Mayawo.

There should be costs attached to these raw materials though.

Nevertheless, this attention to detail, identification of needs, and use of most organic plus recyclable raw materials by Winga should be considered when formulating and implementing some of the government policies so that all public schools have infrastructures that ease learning for learners with special needs.

Government should recognize Winga as per Chapter 5, Enabler 1 of the Malawi 2063 (MW2063) which reads: The spirit and desire to emulate the service and achievements of exceptional Malawians will be encouraged and entrenched in the collective consciousness of the nation through initiatives that recognize, award and reward achievers and excellence.

Winga should be one of the people that should be involved in education policy formulation and implementation as one way of achieving great literacy rates among the youth in this country.

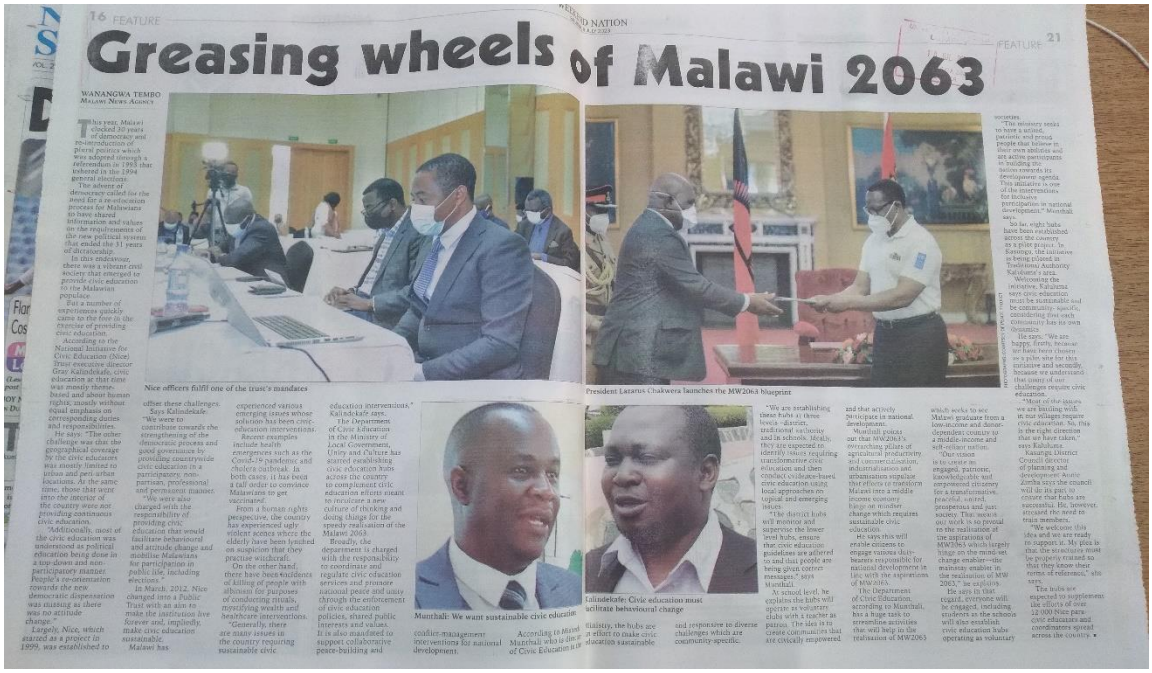
Winga and his team can impart this knowledge and innovativeness to youths, the majority of which are idle. Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET), Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS), and other training institutions should consider roping Winga into vocation training initiatives.

There are several innovators in Malawi whose story we read or watch but disappear as soon as the economic turmoil of this country show its ugly face again.

These are innovators that need to be supported through nurturing of their ideas and funding the latter.

I hope authorities at National Planning Commission (NPC) can keep track of all these innovators and have a strategy on how best to support the innovators so that Malawi can grow a strong manufacturing industry and can halt on most imports whose vile is spreading at supersonic speed.

Winga has given us something to smile about, after all.



16 FEATURE

Greasing wheels of Malawi 2063

WANANGWA TEMBO
Malawi News Agency

This year, Malawi clocked 30 years of democracy and re-introduction of plural politics which was adopted through a referendum in 1993 that ushered in the 1994 general elections.

The advent of democracy called for the need for a re-education process for Malawians to have shared information and values on the requirements of the new political system that ended the 31 years of dictatorship.

In this endeavour, there was a vibrant civil society that emerged to provide civic education to the Malawian populace.

But a number of experiences quickly came to the fore in the exercise of providing civic education.

According to the National Initiative for Civic Education (Nice) Trust executive director Gray Kalindekafe, civic education at that time was mostly theme-based and about human rights, mostly without equal emphasis on corresponding duties and responsibilities.

He says: "The other challenge was that the geographical coverage by the civic educators was mostly limited to urban and peri-urban locations. At the same time, those that went into the interior of the country were not providing continuous civic education.

"Additionally, most of the civic education was understood as political education being done in a top-down and non-participatory manner. People's re-orientation towards the new democratic dispensation was missing as there was no attitude change."

Largely, Nice, which started as a project in 1999, was established to offset these challenges.

Says Kalindekafe: "We were to contribute towards the strengthening of the democratic process and good governance by providing countrywide civic education in a participatory, non-partisan, professional and permanent manner.

"We were also charged with the responsibility of providing civic education that would facilitate behavioural and attitude change and mobilise Malawians for participation in public life, including elections."

In March, 2012, Nice changed into a Public Trust with an aim to make the institution live forever and, impliedly, make civic education sustainable.

Malawi has experienced various emerging issues whose solution has been civic-education interventions.

Recent examples include health emergencies such as the Covid-19 pandemic and cholera outbreak. In both cases, it has been a tall order to convince Malawians to get vaccinated.

From a human rights perspective, the country has experienced ugly violent scenes where the elderly have been lynched on suspicion that they practise witchcraft.

On the other hand, there have been incidents of killing of people with albinism for purposes of conducting rituals, magnifying wealth and healthcare interventions.

"Generally, there are many issues in the country requiring sustainable civic education interventions."

Kalindekafe says.

The Department of Civic Education in the Ministry of Local Government, Unity and Culture has started establishing civic education hubs across the country to complement civic education efforts aimed to reculture a new culture of thinking and doing things for the speedy realisation of the Malawi 2063.

Broadly, the department is charged with the responsibility to coordinate and regulate civic education services and promote national peace and unity through the enforcement of civic education policies, shared public interests and values.

It is also mandated to support collaborative peace-building and conflict-management interventions for national development.

According to Munthali, who is also the Director of Civic Education it is the ministry, the hubs are an effort to make civic education sustainable and responsive to diverse challenges which are community-specific.

"We are establishing these hubs at three levels – district, traditional authority and in schools. Ideally, they are expected to identify issues requiring transformative civic education and then conduct evidence-based civic education using local approaches on topical and emerging issues.

"The district hubs will monitor and supervise the lower level hubs, ensure that civic education guidelines are adhered to and that people are being given correct messages," says Munthali.

At school level, he explains the hubs will operate as volunteer clubs with a teacher as patron. The idea is to create communities that are civically empowered and that actively participate in national development.

Munthali points out that MW2063's overarching pillars of agricultural productivity and commercialisation, industrialisation and urbanisation stipulate that efforts of transforming Malawi into a middle income economy hinge on mindset change which requires sustainable civic education.

He says this will enable citizens to engage various duty-bearers responsible for national development in line with the aspirations of MW2063.

The Department of Civic Education, according to Munthali, has a huge task to streamline activities that will help in the realisation of MW2063 which seeks to see Malawi graduate from a low-income and donor-dependent country to a middle-income and self-reliant nation.

"Our vision is to create an engaged, patriotic, knowledgeable and empowered citizenry for a transformative, peaceful, united, prosperous and just society. This vision of ours will work is so pivotal to the realisation of MW2063 which largely hinge on the mind-set change enabler—the mainstay enabler in the realisation of MW 2063," he explains.

He says in that regard, everyone will be engaged, including students as the schools will also establish civic education hubs operating as voluntary societies.

"The ministry seeks to have a united, patriotic and strong people that believe in their own abilities and are active participants in building its nation towards its development agenda. This initiative is one of the interventions for inclusive participation in national development," Munthali says.

So far, eight hubs have been established across the country as a pilot project. In Blantyre, the initiative is being piloted in Traditional Authority Kalolo's area.

Welcoming the initiative, Kalolo and says civic education must be sustainable and be community- specific, considering that each community has its own dynamics.

He says: "We are happy, firstly, because we have been chosen as a pilot site for this initiative and secondly, because we understand that many of our challenges require civic education.

"Most of the issues we are battling with as our villages require civic education. So, this is the right direction that we have taken," says Kalolo.

Nsanje District Council director of planning and development Austin Zamba says the council will do its part to ensure that hubs are successful. He, however, stressed the need to train members.

"We welcome this idea and we are ready to support it. My plea is that, the structures must be properly created so that they know their terms of reference," she says.

The hubs are expected to supplement the efforts of over 12 000 Nice para-civic educators and coordinators spread across the country. ●

Nice officers fulfil one of the trust's mandates

President Lazarus Chakwera launches the MW2063 blueprint

Munthali: We want sustainable civic education

Kalindekafe: Civic education must achieve behavioural change

Chakwera: Potable water essential for MW 2063

by **Feston Malekezo**

President Lazarus Chakwera has said potable water to all is key if the country is to achieve the Malawi 2063 goals.

Chakwera was speaking in Nkhata Bay yesterday after inspecting works under the Nkhata Bay Town Water Supply Project being implemented by Northern Region Water Board (NRWB).

Chakwera said clean water is a must-have because without potable water, a nation is susceptible to outbreaks such as cholera.

"These modern facilities and provision of water and sanitation to people of Nkhata Bay actually is part of the grand vision of Malawi 2063 and Nkhata Bay as a secondary city will have the provision needed.

"Without water, we are facing some of these outbreaks of diseases that we never expected. That also shows how vulnerable we have been because we have not invested in the things that can truly develop and make our nation self-reliant," he said.

GOOD JOB—Chakwera cheers NRWB workers at the water project site Picture by Benard Mhone

He has since commended NRWB for the project, describing it as top quality.

The project seeks to supply potable water to over 105,000 people in Nkhata Bay District and other surrounding areas.

Briefing Chakwera on the project, one of the board's engineers Catherine Mwafulirwa said the project is 70 percent complete. It is expected to be finalised by February next year.

In Mzuzu, Chakwera inspected progress of Mzuzu Civic Office complex project, Mzuzu Youth Centre Project and Mzuzu Government-Matete-Luwinga bypass road.

According to Mzuzu City Council, the K12 billion civic office project is government-funded. It started this year and is expected to be completed in 2025.

The facility is, among others, expected to have conference rooms, a restaurant, town hall chamber and an underground parking space.

On the youth centre, the council said initially the design excluded a football ground, but the government is considering including it in the plans.

Other facilities that the centre will have include a swimming pool, an office complex, lodging facilities and conference rooms.

In his remarks, Chakwera said it was important for him to physically see progress made so far on the projects rather than just getting reports.

The President is expected to attend Karonga-Chitipa cultural festival in Karonga District today.

YOUTH & REALITY

With Lloyd Chitsulo

Feedback on MW2063

Last week's entry on youth participation as regards Malawi 2063 (MW2063) attracted the attention of the National Planning Commission (NPC).

NPC communications manager Thom Khanje gave feedback by explaining how they are incorporating youths in the development blueprint.

Below is an extract from Khanje's feedback:

"From the word go, NPC decided to make the youth an integral part of its work because long and medium term development planning is about the future.

"The youth are the future. So, as we were envisioning for Malawi 2063, the youth were at the forefront and were the main group in both contribution of ideas and in crafting of the vision.

"The MW2063 vision is now widely considered youth-centric because it not only contains substantial ideas from the youth, but also recognises the youth as the country's greatest resource.

"NPC is keen to hear more from you on how youths can best be engaged."

Such feedback is valued and we look forward to getting more from all our esteemed readers.

Enjoy your weekend!■

Feedback: lloydchitsulo.npl@gmail.com

PHOTOGRAPHS: TSAR LEO

NPC gears up to empower young entrepreneurs for MW2063 results

STEVE CHILUNDU
STAFF REPORTER

The National Planning Commission (NPC) says it is taking steps to empower young entrepreneurs and all business-minded citizens through facilitating access to financial capital for startups or existing businesses that need a financial push.

This comes as the NPC has organised the Access to Entrepreneurship Finance workshop for entrepreneurs to be held on June 1 and 2, 2022, at Bingu International Convention Centre in Lilongwe.

Addressing the media in Lilongwe on Thursday, NPC director of development planning Grace Kumchulesi said the objective of the workshop is to raise awareness about existing and potential financing facilities for entrepreneurship and provide opportunities for matching great business ideas with finance institutions.

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE CHILUNDU

Kumchulesi: Financing options are available

She said: "The workshop comes after noticing testimonies from the youth and entrepreneurs in general that they lack capital opportunities. However, our observation is that financing options are available but that there is information gap as people do not know, hence the workshop to bring together businesses and financiers."

Kumchulesi said while NPC is inviting everyone who is in business or interested in doing business, they would like to specifically invite young people aged between 18 and 35, since the MW2063 is youth-centric with aspirations to achieve an inclusively wealthy and self-reliant nation by 2063.

Kumchulesi said NPC would like to work with those who would like to take part in the implementation of MW2063 by venturing in viable businesses.

Earlier, Minister of Trade and Industry Mark Katsonga Phiri said government established Malawi Agricultural Industrial and Investment Corporation (Maiic) and the National Economic Empowerment Fund along with other initiatives to provide financing for small-scale businesses for economic development.

The conference is supported by, among others, Maiic, National Bank of Malawi, Agricultural Commercialisation and United Nations Capital Development Fund. ■

BOTTOM UP

WITH LEVI ZELEZA MANDA

Let's get back to China for MW2063 loans

We, Malawians, know what we want. Our political, traditional and faith leaders know what this country needs.

In 2009, we massively re-elected President Bingu wa Mutharika because ka(Ngwazi) understood and fulfilled some of our wishes, needs, and wants.

In 2019 and 20120, we rejected the Democratic Progressive Party administration because we felt it had forgotten what we wanted it to do for us.

The majority of Malawian voters chose the Tonse Alliance because it promised what we want.

We know what we want. We want jobs that pay good salaries. We want industries. We want electrical energy. We want a corruption-free country. We want rule of law and ethical governance. We want lasting peace and security. We want a good transportation system. We want good roads. We want good dwelling places. We want to be rich. Don't we?

We know what we want. Since 1993 our needs and aspirations have been captured in all manifestos of all political parties in Malawi; in all government policies; in all parliamentary *Hansard* editions; in all National Statistical Office surveys; in all pastoral letters and in all social media discussions.

Published in 1995, Malawi's Vision 2020 captured our aspirations and our dreams to attain the enviable middle-income status 25 years later. Vision 2020 was aligned to international and regional development agendas and informed our national development policies and programmes.

But, by 2020, Malawi was deemed poorer than before. The industries that kept Malawi's economy buoyant had been sold off to please the International Monetary Fund in its Social Adjustment Programme jihad.

A country that used to be a breadbasket became a food beggar. A country that made and exported some of the best fabric, such as Whitex *Kutchena chitenje*, slipped into and normalised *kaunjika*.

A country that assembled buses, such as those assembled by PEW, and cars, such as those by Mandala Motors, reduced itself to importing everything for automobiles, including door handles.

A country that had an enviable urban transport system, notably the city circular bus, lost out to minibuses, instead of allowing minibuses to compete with the circular, time-conscious city bus network. A country whose trains and lake steamers were sold off and the railway network abandoned.

'But, by 2020, Malawi was deemed poorer than before. The industries that kept Malawi's economy buoyant had been sold off to please the International Monetary Fund in its Social Adjustment Programme jihad'

Feedback:
+265998132702 (sms only)

We know what we want. And the Malawi Vision (MW) 2063 has captured what we should do to achieve it.

In brief, Pillar 1 of the MW 2063 says to improve and increase agricultural production and productivity, we have decided to mechanise and commercialise our agriculture.

So, why are our leaders still wasting money and time on small non-impactful approaches such as the Affordable Inputs Programme (AIP)?

In Chitipa AIP money was stolen by the AIP beneficiaries. In Ntchisi, AIP fertiliser were stolen by beneficiaries of AIP. Wasteful programme. And it must end now.

We, Malawians, direct our leaders that from this year all AIP money should be invested in agricultural commercialisation and mechanisation.

Pillar 2 says we must build industries based on our mining, agriculture, marine and riverine resources and up our knowledge-based economy.

Around industries we will achieve Pillar 3: Urbanisation.

We all know that industries will produce jobs and products that may be exported to earn foreign exchange.

But show us one industry that has started? Yet, our leaders and, especially, our members of Parliament, are busy wasting precious time discussing things that will not help us.

If it is a question of money to capitalise projects, let us ask China for unconditional loans to implement our MW2063.

Through its Belt and Road Initiative, China is helping countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa to improve, among others, road infrastructure, seaports, airports, water and energy supplies, and education facilities. ■

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
Call Nancy on 0888 843 266
P.O. Box 280, ZOMBA
UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

Nice Trust, NCP in MW2063 interventions

National Initiative for Civic Education (Nice) Public Trust has rolled-out interventions to do with mind-set change across the country. The idea is to help Malawians embrace transformative thinking. This is in line with government's Malawi 2063, the country's development blueprint, aimed at transforming the country into a wealthy and self-reliant industrialised upper middle-income economy by the year 2063. Our Contributor AYAMBA KANDODO caught up with Nice civic education officer CHRISTOPHER NAPHIYO to hear more about the interventions. Excerpts:

Naphiyo: Empower citizens

PHOTOGRAPH: AYAMBA KANDODO

Q Describe the intervention, what is it all about?

A As a background, it is important to applaud the Government of Malawi for recognizing that good governance is a prerequisite for economic growth and development as reflected in the Malawi 2063. The Malawi 2063 provides a general guiding direction on priority areas for national development up to the year 2063 through its short ten-year plans. Currently, the Malawi 2063 Implementation Plan (MIP-1, 2021 to 2030), hinges the implementation of all its pillars on several enablers that include mind-set change and effective governance systems and institutions to which Nice can make significant contributions. There is a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that was signed between the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Nice Trust through which the two institutions agreed to work together in popularizing the Malawi 2063 to all cadres of people as well as the dissemination of messages on the Mind-set Change Agenda as outlined in the Malawi 2063 in general, and the Malawi 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) in particular.

Considering that the Malawi 2063 is youth-centric, Nice has prioritised the youth in its programming by orienting youth network members across the country on the blueprint as well as strategised on how best they can factor their aspirations and dreams into current development projects and programs. Equally targeted are members of ADCs and senior traditional leaders (chiefs) considering their influential roles and voice on issues of local development.

Question Two: Why coming up with these interventions?

A These interventions seek to harness the demographic dividend to initiate and drive the mind-set change agenda with youths and other community structures as drivers of development for a positive value system that includes unity, patriotism, integrity, hard work, self-help, an 'I can do' attitude as well as disdain for hand-outs that are mostly meant to keep them under control in a web of the "Big Man Syndrome" that wishes to perpetrate the patronage system.

Nice Trust has been entrusted with this enabler in partnership and through the guidance of the Ministry of Civic Education and National Unity. It is important to note that the strategic pillars in NICE's Strategic Plan are in alignment with some key priority areas identified in the Malawi 2063, hence the interest.

Q What kind of strategies have you employed to achieve your expected outcomes?

A Nice Trust has a long history in the implementation of civic education interventions and considering that these were initial interventions, mostly it was in the form of orientation workshops and consultative meetings. Along the way, considering that we aim at being result-oriented, we intend to employ other innovative strategies that may include panel discussions, public debates, and community or town hall meetings in addition to practical sessions that may be hands-on on other matters like self-reliance. Actually, during these initial sessions, one of the resolutions is that of communities doing a mapping of opportunities that could act as stepping stones for the achievement of some of the outcomes and results within their areas.

Q Malawians seem to be so much used to traditional way of doing things; do you think they will embrace this mind-set change?

A Yes! Malawians are willing to embrace change. The other good thing is that Malawians realise that it is possible to re-orient themselves through interventions such as the ones we are implementing since they still reminisce some of the positive values and discipline that had been instilled by the one-party regime. This realisation provides an opportunity for the country to re-define its developmental roadmap for the next four decades.

One exceptional example that shows that it is possible to embrace mind-set change with its major components is the way Malawians have recently responded to initiatives aimed at embracing self-reliance through production of some household items that have been conducted in Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. Malawians are ready to embrace hard work and innovation with a view to becoming entrepreneurs that churn our products for local as well as international consumption.

Q Do you see Malawi achieving the aspirations of the agenda by the 2063?

A It is possible to achieve this if we all put our efforts together. Malawians should not look at the leadership alone, but rather put themselves in that 'ndi zotheka' (it is possible) mode in everything that we do. We need to cast off all our negative perceptions and start viewing ourselves as Malawians that are destined towards embracing change. Although it may sound academic and theoretical, the example of China and the 'miracle' that transformed that country between 1978 and 2008 should be a good source of inspiration for Malawians as well as other nations that are on the lower side of the global economic scale. Closer to home, we have all heard about the case of Rwanda.

Q What kind of a world should Malawians envision or aspire in 41 years' time?

A As explained in the Malawi 2063 as well as the MIP-1, we should aim at raising the economy of our nation by empowering its citizens more economically through locally attainable strategies and approaches. It is possible to support and invest in agricultural, horticultural, mining, artisan and other sectors in many districts. The idea of the mega farms that was touted through the 2019 and 2020 campaigns could be instrumental in this kind of economic growth and revolution.

OPINION

Implement PFM reforms to regain budget support

LAYMAN'S REFLECTIONS

WITH ERIC MTEMANG'OMBE

President Lazarus Chakwera on Tuesday urged the European Union (EU) to resume budget support and hopefully help his Tonse-led administration to address some serious financial gaps in the national budget.

On the sidelines of the Least Development Countries (LDCs) summit in Doha, Qatar, Chakwera assured EU Commissioner for Partnership Jutta Urpilainen that his administration is committed to implementing public finance management reforms, one of the key conditions for resuming direct budget support.

Malawi's economy has slumped since the country's development partners withdrew direct budget support in 2013 because of concerns over the country's human rights record and macroeconomic fundamentals.

Over the years, successive governments have been reducing their spending on critical sectors such as education and health as they sought to manage financing gaps created in the development and recurrent budgets.

Before the GBS exit, donors contributed 40 percent to the recurrent budget and 80 percent to the recurrent budget. It is an open secret that the several attempts to finance the budget without donor support have been largely unsuccessful.

As it stands now, government spending in the education and health sectors has slumped since the exit of the Common Approach to Budget support.

In the health sector, spending per capita rose from $7 (or 2.76 of GDP) dollars in 2000 to $40 in 2013 (or 11.5 percent of GDP) but has since dropped to $30 in 2019 (or .7.39 percent of GDP), according to statistics from the World Bank.

Likewise, spending in the education sector rose from 16.5 percent of GDP in 2003 to 20.5 percent of GDP in 2013 before peaking at 21 percent of GDP in 2015, two years after the exit of the GBS. However, spending in this sector has slumped to 11.5 percent of GDP in 2020.

Considering that education and health are the two sectors that will ultimately determine Malawi's drive for human capital development, a key enabler of the Malawi 2063 agenda, the government must getSingle-source the necessary support to put Malawi get Malawi's development agenda back on track.

And so far, the feedback from the EU has been positive.

Last year, EU Ambassador Rune Skinnebach expressed hope the continental bloc would resume direct budgetary support to Malawi after noting substantial progress in the public finance management reforms and the fight against corruption.

However, there are areas that Chakwera and his nine-party coalition will need to improve on to fully convince the EU and other development supporters to bail Malawi out of its financial mess, more so when the country's traditional donors are dealing with economic crises of their own.

'The Tonse Alliance will have to demonstrate that it is unequivocally committed to stamping out institutionalised corruption by preventing the pilferage and abuse of public finances as well as expediting the prosecution of suspects of fraud and embezzlement, among others'

The Tonse Alliance will have to demonstrate that it is unequivocally committed to stamping out institutionalised corruption by preventing the pilferage and abuse of public finances as well as expediting the prosecution of suspects of fraud and embezzlement, among others.

Granted, Malawi has implemented some reforms in the country's PFM laws, including the Public Finance Management Act, the Public Procurement Act and the Public Audit Act, but it has failed to enforce their principles.

There are still glaring loopholes that unprincipled individuals in the public sector use to divert public resources to their pockets. Single source procurement and inflated contracts, among others, continue draining government resources as Treasury pays over the top for mediocre services.

When people suspect foul play, the government takes too long to prosecute the suspects. That seriously undermines the efficiency of Malawi's justice system. People will not fear corruption if they know their cases are unlikely to be prosecuted.

It does not help that prosecutors have started offering plea bargains to suspects, giving them a chance to avoid prison sentences if they repay the money they stole. Unless plea bargains are offered to the small fish in return for testimony for convicting their bosses, this will not serve any meaningful purpose.

Chakwera and his lieutenants in the nine-party alliance will have to show that they are committed to enforcing the Acts. Changing the wording of an Act while the government continues with its laissez-faire attitude towards enforcing compliance in public procurement an audits will not cut it.

The President has be sitting for months or Public Sector report me to address some gaps lead to the pilferage wastage of public resou

If Chakwera really to convince Malawian donors that he is com to PFM reform, all to do is blow the that report and im the recommen prescribed in them

Feedback : mtemangombeericnoel@gmail.com

OPINION & ANALYSIS

SIX QUESTIONS

DVV SOUTHERN AFRICA COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER DYSON MTHAWANJI

Adult education key for Malawi's Vision 2063

While Malawi is on the road to realise her 2063 development blueprint, DVV International, a German organisation, says adult education is key to achieving the goal. Our Reporter CLIMIN CHIMOKO spoke to DVV International Communications Officer for Southern Africa, DYSON MTHAWANJI on this and other related matters. Excerpts

Q1 When did DVV International open its doors in Malawi?

A1 It officially opened its doors in Malawi in December 2019. The Malawi country office also the headquarters for DVV International Southern Africa, which includes South Africa and Mozambique. We are working with the National Centre for Literacy and Adult Education (NCLAE) at the Ministry of Gender, Community Development and Social Welfare. NCLAE oversees approximately 30 000 literacy centres nationally. About 85 percent of the centres are run by female facilitators for Chichewa. Among other interventions, DVV International supports these centres through training of literacy instructors.

Q2 Do people fully understand Adult Learning and Education (ALE) in Malawi?

A2 Historically, ALE in Malawi and Southern Africa has been viewed in a narrow way as just literacy and numeracy (Sukulu za kwacha). We need to move away from this old-fashioned way of thinking. ALE is about all of the learning and skills that adults need for their lives across multiple sectors.

Q3 Of late, we have seen much talk on ALE and its visibility. How important is it to personal, community and national development?

A3 ALE is an important component in all development aspects. For people to follow and understand good agricultural practices, they should be able to read various messages that government or NGOs put forward. ALE is important in health, climate change, entrepreneurship and all other sectors. In short, ALE is a cross-cutting issue which should be mainstreamed in all development interventions.

According to the World Bank, smallholder farmers account for 80 percent of Malawi's population but statistics show that 60 percent of them are illiterate. Malawi is an agro-based economy; thus, we should make more small-holder farmers literate for them to easily understand new agricultural technologies.

Also take note that in July 2022, Malawi Government approved the National Adult Literacy and Education Strategic Plan. The policy and the strategic plan

Government should also increase funding towards ALE.

Q6 Is Malawi making progress on Adult Learning and Education?

A6 Yes, there is great progress. As I have mentioned previously, the country did not have any policy regarding ALE. Even now there is a National Policy on Adult Literacy and Education which was approved by the Malawi Government in February 2020. The ALE policy aims to reduce illiteracy by 50 percent between 2020 and 2030. People needs to be understood as a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional learning. We should not limit our discussion to the ability to read and write. The ability to read and write in one's language and others' languages is important because it helps one to be aware of knowledge hidden behind those languages' codes.

ALE goes beyond literacy and numeracy. It provides the necessary skills and information that one may require in people's everyday lives. This may include information about hygiene, political rights etc. That is why we should make literacy centres attractive as far as the provided skills and knowledge are concerned. Men think of engaging in things that will give them good reward in relation to what they already engage in. Therefore, there is a need to bring innovative approaches towards ALE.

Literacy and numeracy are foundational skills but they need to be linked to practical knowledge and skills that people need and use in their daily lives. To redesign the ALE focus, DVV International is working with the Government of Malawi and civil society Organisations in the country to promote Integrated Adult Education.

Through Integrated Adult Education, participants learn knowledge and skills in areas they need such as agriculture and entrepreneurship while simultaneously learning literacy and numeracy.

Yes, there is huge support. The United Nations championed Sustainable Development Goal number four challenges countries to "ensure inclusive

PHOTOGRAPH: JACOB NANKHONYA

Mthawanji: It is important to mainstream ALE because it is a hub of community development

A4 As there was no policy in the past, it was difficult for stakeholders to follow a common direction. The policy enables country to understand what the national goals and aspirations are to contribute to achieving these. The goal of the policy is to reduce illiteracy and enhance skills development and education amongst adults and targeted youths for effective participation in socio economic development. The policy has four priority areas, which are: coordination and collaboration; access, relevance and quality; visibility and awareness; and resource mobilisation. The policy will thus give government and stakeholders the much-needed direction to accelerate achievement of literacy goals in relation to the four priority areas.

Also take note that in July 2022, Malawi Government approved the National Adult Literacy and Education Strategic Plan. The policy and the strategic plan

contributions towards economic and sustainable development. ALE enables people at the grass-root to effectively participate in development.

In Malawi, it was demonstrated by the academicians in 2009 that one additional year of schooling increased lifetime earnings by 10 percent on average, by 9.7 percent among male workers and 11.4 percent among female workers. Education contributes 3 percent to the GDP which is estimated at K6.7 trillion according to the 2020 annual economic report by the Ministry of Finance. Higher levels of literacy are needed to improve people's contribution towards personal and community development in Malawi.

ALE is the least funded of all sub-sectors of education, even though it is by far the longest learning period of our lives. Funding for ALE has been less than 1 percent of the education sector budget

instance, be

Q4 In 2020, the Malawi

PAGE 10

COVID-19 THREATENS MW2063 ASPIRATIONS—NPC

ORAMA CHIPHWANYA
STAFF REPORTER

Covid-19 has presented risks for the attainment of Malawi's national development aspirations as espoused in the Malawi 2063 (MW2063) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the National Planning Commission (NPC) has said.

NPC public relations and communications manager Thom Khanje said this in a written response to questionnaire in the context of the 2021/22 Human Development Index which has indicated that Malawi has over the past two years stagnated in improving human development conditions.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report ranked Malawi on position 169 out of the 191 globally ranked nations for a second year in a row, revealing that global disruptions such as the Covid-19 pandemic have swept social and economic shifts in countries.

Khanje has since indicated that in addition to declined economic activities and growth rates, Covid-19-related effects have included

the erosion of domestic institutional capacities, reversal of recent achievements in health and education and reversal of trade and private sector investment streams, which had brightened in recent years.

He said: "Further, social insecurity has heightened, with the evolving situation exposing various deficiencies in the healthcare systems which need to be addressed urgently.

"On the other hand, with large numbers of job losses in the formal sector, the informal sector has ceased to play an effective role of absorbing shock for alternative livelihoods, as the latter has not been spared from the Covid-19 induced decline."

The Human development report (HDR), an analysis of a broader view on human development which assesses average lon term dimensions in area of long and healthy life access to knowledge an decent standard of living shows a country HDR is considered belo the average of low HD countries in the regi

PAGE

The Covid-19 pandemic eroded institutional capacity

Nice Trust tackles mindset change towards MW2063

...ublic Trust civic education and governance expert BONIFACE PHIRI explains what this is all about and the role of Nice Trust. Excerpts

Q1. Where does transformational mindset change begin from?

A1. It begins at the mind. It roots from attitudes, mentalities, beliefs, approaches and mindsets that collectively aim at achieving national prosperity and unity. It is the social and political slice that is of major concern here because this thing is all about the citizens. It deals with citizens' patriotism, and obligation to their country. But, to achieve this prosperity, unity and transformation, citizens must be involved in the decisions being undertaken by implementers and they need to understand both long and short term benefits. Given, mistakes will be made along the way and money will be lost, but a quick and more effective approach that shapes public understanding and unity of purpose holds the key and must be discovered.

Q2. Does this really require reforms and legislation of some kind?

A2. Precisely. For instance, we at Nice Trust are telling people in communities we work to understand and expect certain reforms and legislation to be changed to suit our aspirations as a nation. We also advise policy framers and implementers to ensure that the reforms being implemented not only instruct introduction of new Acts but also a transferral from outmoded customs and norms that compromise development and prosperity.

Q3. Generating ideas like these is easy, but setting policy, direction and implementation is hard. Do you agree?

A3. I agree entirely. But, policy creators must consider themselves as inventors and engineers of the future. Leaders, especially politicians need to start looking yonder, beyond their five-year prospect and take a serious peep into the impending future. Foresight and forethought are paramount in this regard. Policy originators must craft a society that will dreamily fit the future. Each government ministry, department and agency or organisation needs to have a fore-thinker heading them; those that can scheme a great future for our nation. Malawi is a small country in terms of size and that offers certain advantages such as opportunity to swing gears fast and assume change it wants quickly. People out there want prosperity and we hear this every time we meet them in their communities. You also see them discuss how our neighbouring countries are advancing in terms of development. So, government must be well versed with the alphabet of the language of the general populace.

PHOTOGRAPH: KUMBON

Phiri: Malawians should be active citizens

Q4. How crucial could mindset change be to the development of this nation?

A4. You see, over the years we have placed much prominence on micro/macro-economics or sometimes leadership to bring about development. Of course, this works, but, socio-economic development gets accelerated when citizen mindsets transform because people's character builds a nation. It is unfortunate to say this, but, in Malawi we have a predominantly retrogressive mindset which counters productivity. This needs to change quickly and as a nation we should espouse a positively industrious mindset that spurs such elements as employees or workers' productivity, citizens work and social habits, cultural values and practices, including how we use technology. Malawians should be active citizens and discontinue being onlookers in our own battles. For instance, it is saddening to notice how people take to social media to rant and throw abuse when things go wrong without attempting to offer solutions. It's as if we are living in a borrowed country.

Q5. How could religion help in this regard?

A5. It's a shame that for a very long time faith and religion have been methodically disused as agents of mindset change to bring about socio-economic transformation of the country. In our interventions at Nice Trust, for instance, faith leaders are being encouraged to play a central role in supporting government and individual organization initiatives and efforts aimed at building a united and prosperous society. Faith leaders at all levels need to be asked to enthusiastically start propagating messages that propel citizens to patriotically serve the society. Malawi being a self-declared "God-fearing" nation can use religion as the sharpest and most effective tool to bring about the desired mindset change for development because it infiltrates cultures and societal fabrics so easily. Religion is all about person, conviction, optimism and implication of life as such it must be one of our leading instruments for the purpose under discussion.

FEATURE

'WEEKEND NATION

Doha programme: What's in stock for Malawi?

DUMBANI MZALE
CONTRIBUTOR,
DOHA, QATAR

As 46 leaders of Least Development Countries (LDCs) category are meeting in Doha, Qatar, on one hand, about 1.2 billion unsuspecting inhabitants in these World's poorest nations are waiting with unabated breath to hear the last word of hope from the conference.

Malawi's estimated 20 million-population is among the 1.2 billion population that is sniffing optimism from the on-going talks, whose sole referee or moderator is their own President, Lazarus Chakwera.

Seemingly tired of past rhetoric and sugar-coated statements by their previous leaders, LDCs occupants, who represent about 17 percent of the global population, expect nothing but tangible actions from their leaders, actions that will address their special needs while propelling them on a wheel of prosperity and sustainable development.

They are desperate for a riveted playing field that will accord them equal rights and opportunities just like their counterparts in the developed world.

This because they comprise the planet's 46 poorest nations that are "possibly bearing the heaviest brunt" of coronavirus, climate change catastrophes and Russia's war in Ukraine.

Just like Malawi, the 45 other countries are starved of financial resources, drowning deep into spiraling debt, and are still struggling with the historic injustice of an unequal Covid-19 response, starting with vaccines for them to administer to their people.

They are simply trapped in vicious cycles that are making development difficult, said UN chief Antonio Guterres.

New blueprint in town

Ostraught with continued unfairness of the global multilateral system that continues to exacerbate inequalities between a local baker operator Joster Mavale of Gonondo Village, Traditional Authority (T/A) Nkilooko in Nkhata and Che-hung, the owner of a fast-food eatery store in New York, United States of America, LDCs now have a common weapon in place.

The common weapon in this is the New Generation Programme of Action for the LDCs for the Decade 2022-2031 (DPoA).

That much-awaited document replaces the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) on for LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020, which was adopted be the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs in May 2011.

The 48-page booklet was adopted by the first part of the Fifth United Nations Conference on LDCs on 17 March, 2022 at the UN headquarters in New York.

The UNGA adoption of the DPoA was by consensus, presided over by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani.

But of interest to Malawi remains the fact that the DPoA is its guiding document of the development trajectory as well as for LDCs for the next decade (2022-2031).

Interestingly, during this span, Malawi will also be simultaneously implementing her Malawi Vision 2063 (MW2063) First 10-year Implementation Plan (MIP-1) which intends to transform Malawi into a lower-middle income country come 2030.

But the Doha blueprint provides a clear pathway for both the LDCs and development partners to achieve accelerated economic development in LDCs in the true spirit of leaving no one behind.

This is premised on a common assertion at the conference that LDCs are a battleground on which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be won or lost.

What is in stock for Malawi?

President Chakwera, in his capacity as chairperson for LDCs, has repeatedly told the high-level conference that with the new guiding blueprint for LDCs now handy, the pursuit of middle-income status by Malawi and other LDCs must be different. He retorts that the path to development must now be more responsible for the welfare of all mankind and more responsive to the urgent need for development that lifts all nations. According to Chakwera, Malawi and other LDCs can no longer engage themselves in "wishful thinking."

"We, actually, have a plan of action, the Doha plan, a development blueprint that encapsulates the vision of LDCs within a complex global developmental landscape. It is an excellent and pragmatic plan with several key implementation tenets," said the Malawi leader when he opened the

Chakwera prepares to cut a ribbon marking the launch of MW2063

A household that mirrors Malawi's rural poverty

Tips Malawi, other LDCs on Doha programme: Nkosi

Munthali: We first need to be put among the group of countries that are poor

5th LDCs Summit on March 4 2023.

Throughout the rest of the meetings, Chakwera has chorused that Malawi, just like all LDCs, needs to embrace the Doha Programme of Action as a reference point for own national plans and integrate it in the UN Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the UN Sustainable Development Co-operation Framework.

Quizzed to explain what the DPoA means to Malawi in simple terms, National Planning Commission (NPC) director general Thomas Chataghalala Munthali said the blueprint need as well as the 5th LDCs Conference come at a time Malawi has recently launched its MW2063 vision that carries the aspirations of inclusive wealth creation and self-reliance.

He said for Malawi to attain such a vision, "we first need to be put among the group of countries that are poor. LDCs. In order to do that, the Vision's (five) implementation plan has put a milestone that we graduate into a low middle income economy by 2030 and meet most of the SDGs. We have need to tell the world of our resolve so we can harness the partnerships both technical and financial largely towards the productive capacities that will help us get out of this category that has remained with us since 1971."

International policy analyst Alex Nkosi thinks the DPoA offers a platform for Malawi and other LDCs to leverage and pursue their development priorities and challenges, citing abject poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to basic services, and climate change injustices, among others.

"Furthermore, Malawi and other LDCs should use the Doha Programme as a tool to strengthen partnerships with developed countries, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector," he says.

Tellingly, as many have put it during the on-going conference, the DPoA simply manifests a new generation of renewed and re-engineered commitments between the LDCs and their development partners, including the private sector, civil society and governments at all levels. Malawi cannot afford to embrace it but simply grip it proactively and implement it to the letter, more are topics

Excellence Integrity Responsibility Leadership

free advice
THE NATION NATION NATION

GUEST

'LDC5 conference offers opportunity to end poverty'

From tomorrow, March 5 to March 9, President Lazarus Chakwera is expected to lead heads of the world's 46 low-income nations in the crunch negotiations with world leaders and international partners to make the Doha Programme of Action work. Malawi will also hand over the chairmanship of the least-developed countries (LDCs) group at the United Nations Fifth Least Developed Countries Conference (LDC5) underway in Doha, Qatar. Our staff writer MOSES MICHAEL-PHIRI caught up with the Minister of Information and Digitalisation MOSES KUNKUYU in Doha to find out how crucial the conference is for low-income nations like Malawi. Excerpts:

Q: How crucial is this conference for Malawi?

A: First, one of the two milestones in the Malawi 2063 First 10-Year Implementation Plan [MIP-1] is graduating to a low middle-income economy by 2030; hence, the summit will be an important platform for Malawi to build partnerships for graduation strategies out of the Least Developing Countries (LDCs) category. Malawi's goal is not to go to the next LDC forum having graduated.

Second, Malawi will be handing-over the chairmanship of the LDCs this year and this forum will be an important precursor in that regard as it will be the last one for Malawi to chair so various LDCs and partners will be looking forward to appreciating from the current chair the lessons learnt and the challenges that still remain for LDCs that need prioritisation.

PHOTOGRAPH: NATION

Kunkuyu: Chakwera wants LDCs to graduate by building their productive capacities

Q: So, what are some of the key talking points during this summit?

A: Some of the key talking points are around building partnerships with development partners and governments, especially developed countries and those that have graduated, around supporting LDCs like Malawi to build productive capacities that will aid them graduate; reach out to private sector players that will be at the conference in marketing Malawi's vision of inclusive growth creation by marketing win-win potential investments in food security, mega-farming, mining, manufacturing, tourism and trade-facilitating economic infrastructure that will help Malawi graduate out of LDC category at the shortest time possible; promote social investments in SDGs especially those that will promote self-reliance so as not to leave anyone behind as we graduate out of the LDCs.

So, Malawi's multilateral and bilateral engagements will largely be around these elements.

Q: Some experts say this meeting presents a litmus test for global commitment to make poverty history. What is Malawi going to highlight to ensure countries commit to fight poverty?

A: As I stated above, the bottom line is that Malawi needs to focus a lot more on the productive sectors—such as mega-farming, mining, manufacturing, tourism and trade-facilitating economic infrastructure without neglecting the social sectors. This is because the social sectors are very important for a good quality of life but they don't generate resources of their own hence need vibrant productive sectors that can sustainably fund them.

Malawi has for a long time neglected these productive sectors and focused more on the social sectors and social protection interventions—this has sometimes happened by default due to the exogenous shocks that have necessitated supporting the affected populations.

Focusing on the productive sectors will help to build buffer resources that can be drawn on when the country is faced with exogenous shocks, so we don't turn to donors and debt every time a shock hits the economy/country.

Q: President Chakwera has led LDCs over the past year or so, what are some of the highlights of his chairmanship?

A: There are two key highlights that come up immediately. First, has been President Chakwera's commendable efforts in rallying partnerships towards supporting LDCs to graduate by building their productive capacities. Over the period of his chairmanship, there has been more resources going towards the LDCs on supporting regional connectivity and e-trade such as those being facilitated by UNCTAD lately.

Second, under his leadership, a message of avoiding Western nations and multinationals exploiting LDCs for their natural resource endowments and treating them as important global partners has been embraced by most LDCs leaders, especially those from Africa such as DRC it's a leaders' voice that is now revibrating on various engagement platforms.

Q: What last word do you have ahead of the summit?

A: This conference comes at a time we recently launched our MW2063 vision and its 10-year implementation plan which will require that we graduate into a low middle income economy by 2030 and meet most of the SDGs. We need to tell the world of our resolve so we can harness the partnerships both technical and financial largely towards the productive capacities that will help us get out of this category that has remained with us since 1971.

Further, our resolve as a country to have this as our last summit to attend and hand-over the chairmanship for good will require radical investments and new ways of doing things. A number of private sector players, developed countries, and around 16 LDCs that are on the path to graduating soon will be there and so interfacing with them at this conference will help in getting practical lessons and support for fast-tracking deals towards our graduation path.

In Malawi, both State and non-State actors need to develop a positive mindset and look at any efforts that can increase our chances of graduating, as worthy of support in full because the benefits will accrue to us all as a nation.